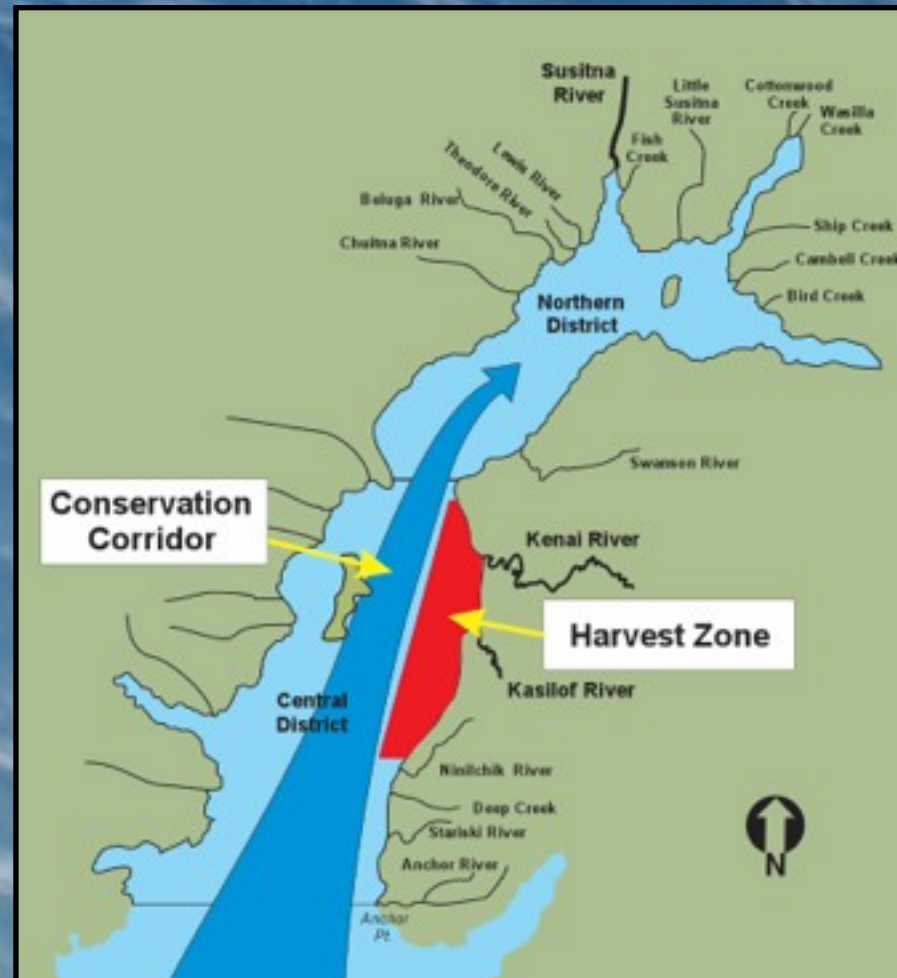


Juneau, We Have a Problem






Northern Cook Inlet Fisheries

by MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission
Senate Resources Committee

March 2014



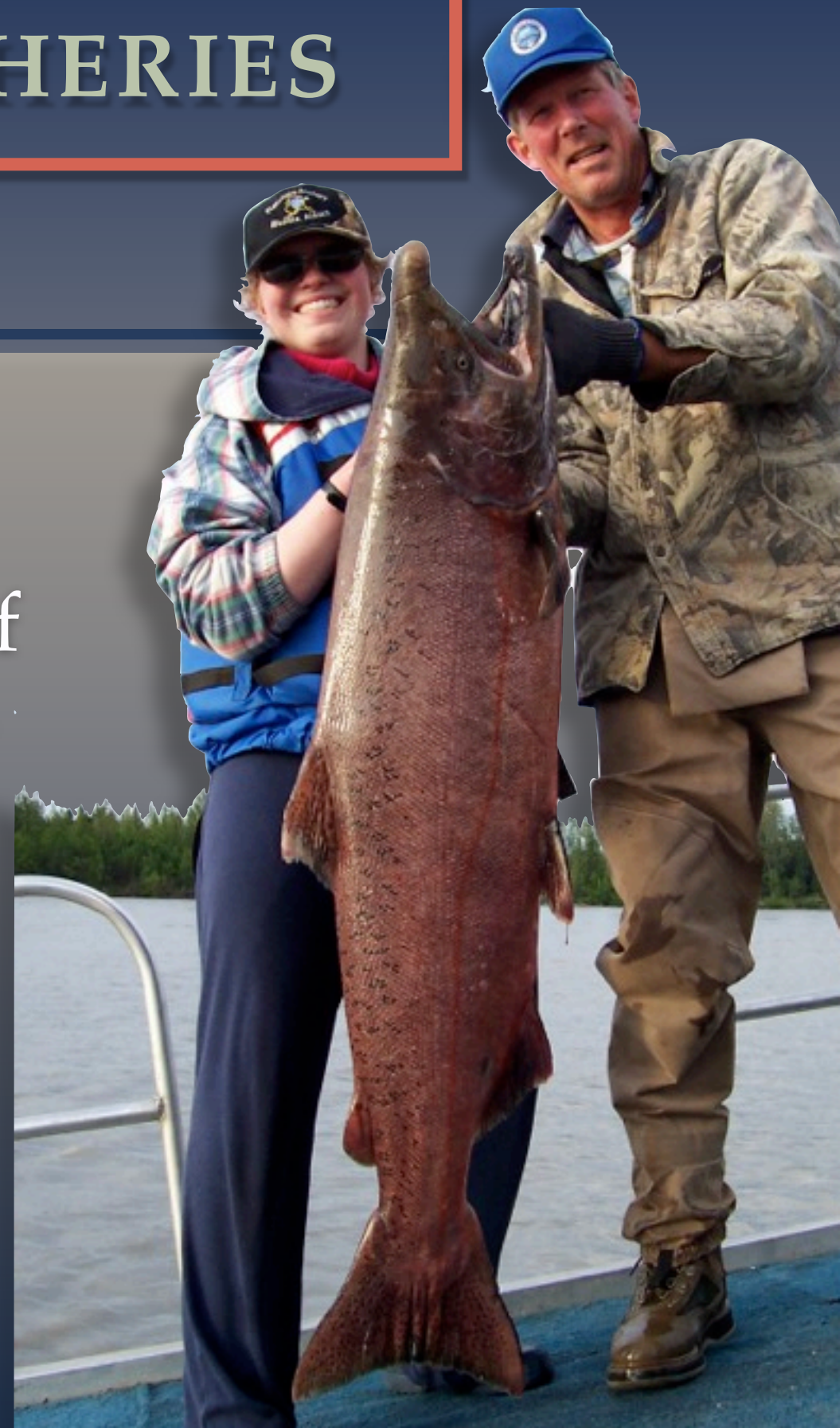
MAT-SU BOROUGH FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION

-  2007 Established as Mayor's Blue Ribbon Sportsmen's Committee, 7 members appointed by Mayor and Assembly
-  2011 Adopted into Borough code as Fish & Wildlife Commission
-  Purpose: to represent the interests of the Borough in the conservation and allocation of fish, wildlife, and habitat



UPPER COOK INLET FISHERIES

Salmon are **essential** to the character, lifestyle and economy of the Mat-Su Borough



Upper Cook Inlet

a complex, mixed-stock fishery

Run Timing of Salmon In UCI



UCI Sport Fishery

Population - Nearly 2/3 of AK's residents
reside along shores of UCI

250,000 people sport fish annually
160,000 are salmon fishermen
30,000 households fish for personal use

About 1 out of 3 Alaskans sport fish

highest rate in the nation



\$ Economic Value of Fishing \$

The value of commercial fisheries has always been widely known, yet the economic significance of sport fishing has only recently gained recognition

Statewide \$1.4 billion spent sport fishing 2007



Half of all sport fishing in AK occurs in Cook Inlet, Anglers spent \$733 million in 2007 which supported 8,056 jobs and generated \$55 million in state and local taxes

Mat-Su Anglers fished nearly 300,000 days in 2007 spent \$118 million and generated \$31 M to \$64 M to local economy

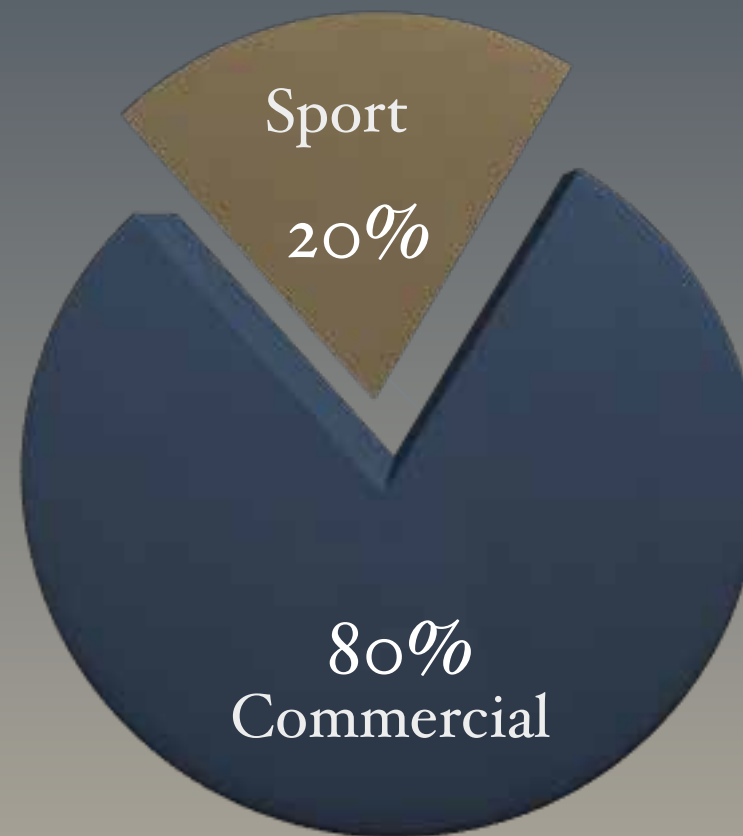


Wholesale value of commercial salmon fishing in 2007 in Cook Inlet = \$ 77 million

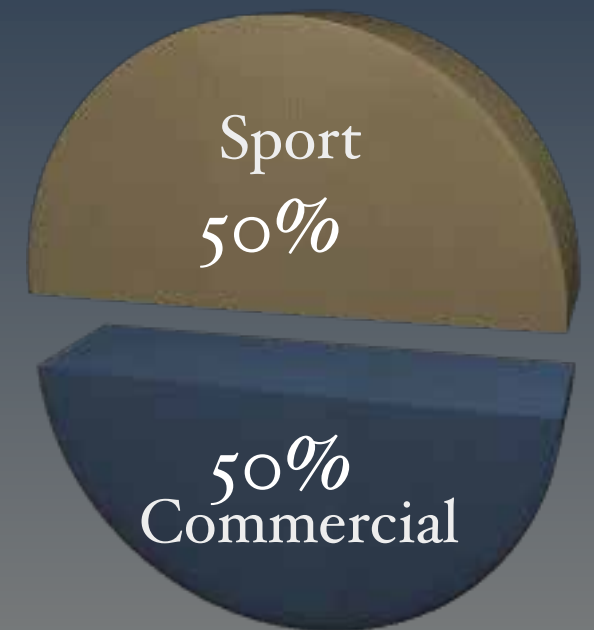
Upper Cook Inlet Harvest Shares



UCI Sockeye
3 million/year



All UCI Salmon
4 million/year



UCI Coho
400,000/year

*Sport includes personal use fisheries, subsistence and brood stock

MAT-SU SALMON STOCKS OF CONCERN



7 out of 11 Stocks of Concern in Alaska are in North Cook Inlet

Susitna sockeye declared Stock of Concern in 2008

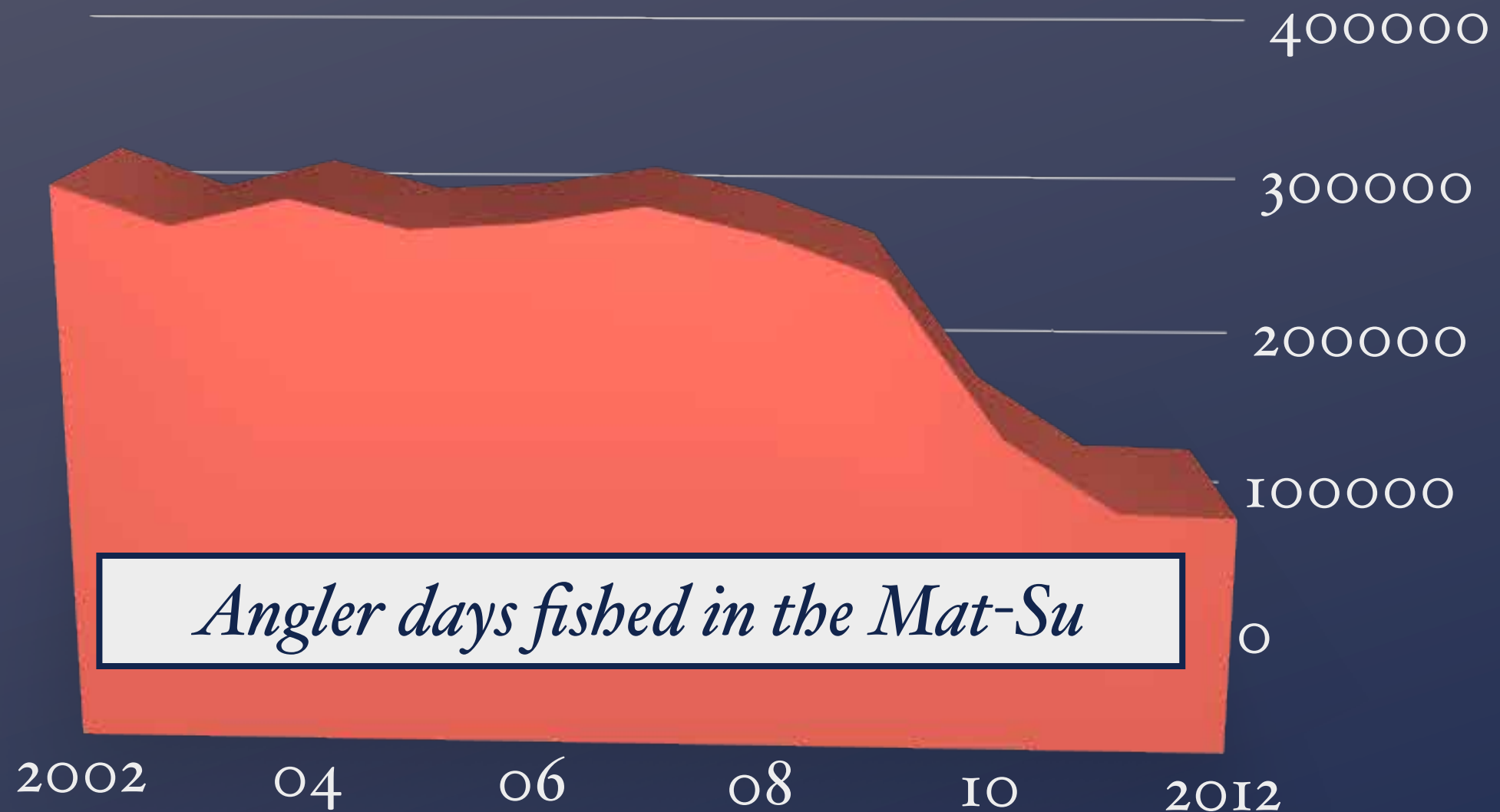
Six king stocks declared Stock of Concern in 2011

Potential future Stocks of Concern

- Jim Creek - Coho
- Little Susitna River - Coho
- Sheep Creek - Kings



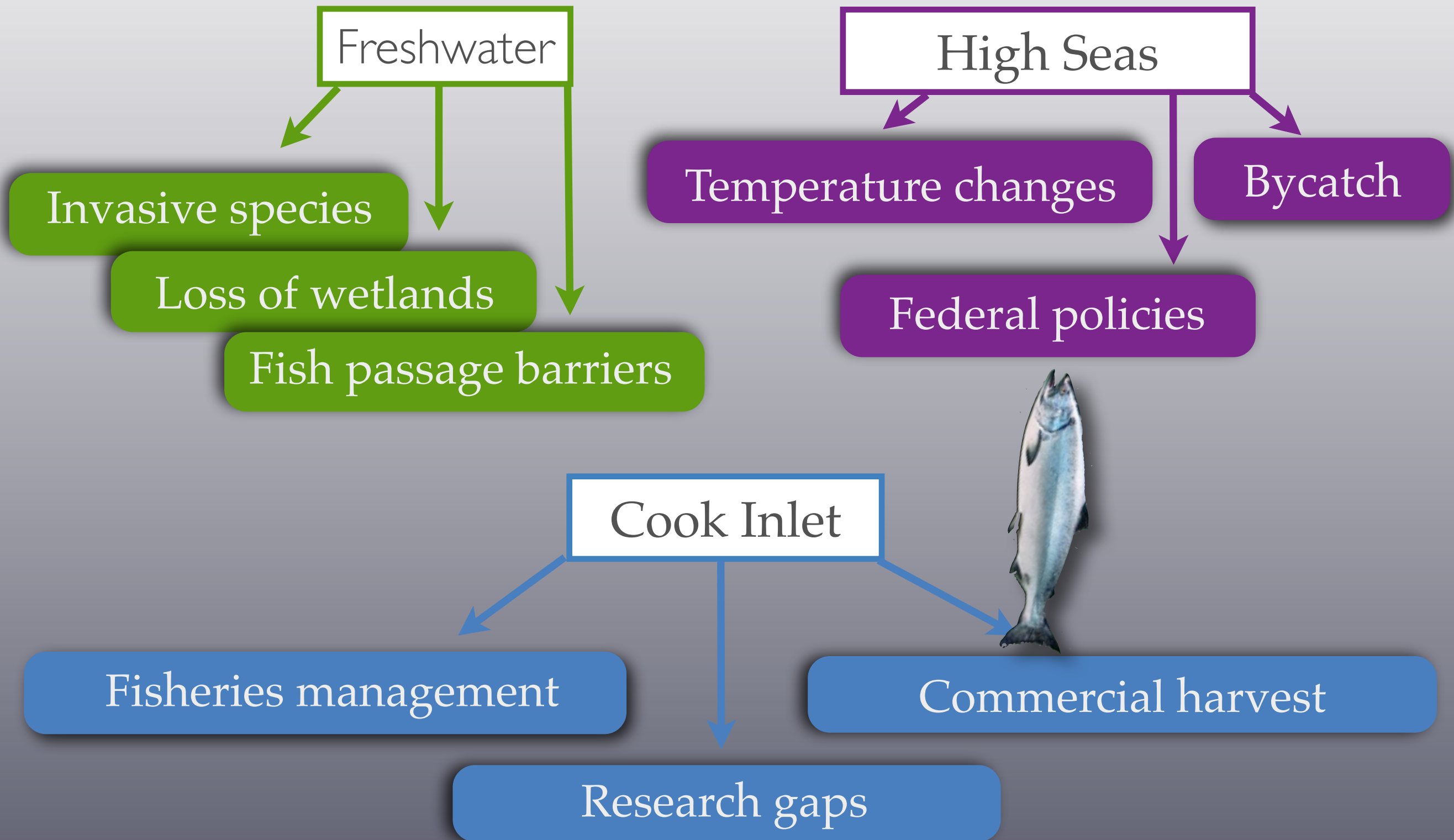
Sport fishing Is Plummeting in Mat-Su



Closures and restrictions to the recreational fishery have caused participation, as defined by angler-days, to crash.

In 2012, participation fell to the lowest level in 37 years

Factors Affecting Salmon Abundance in Northern Cook Inlet



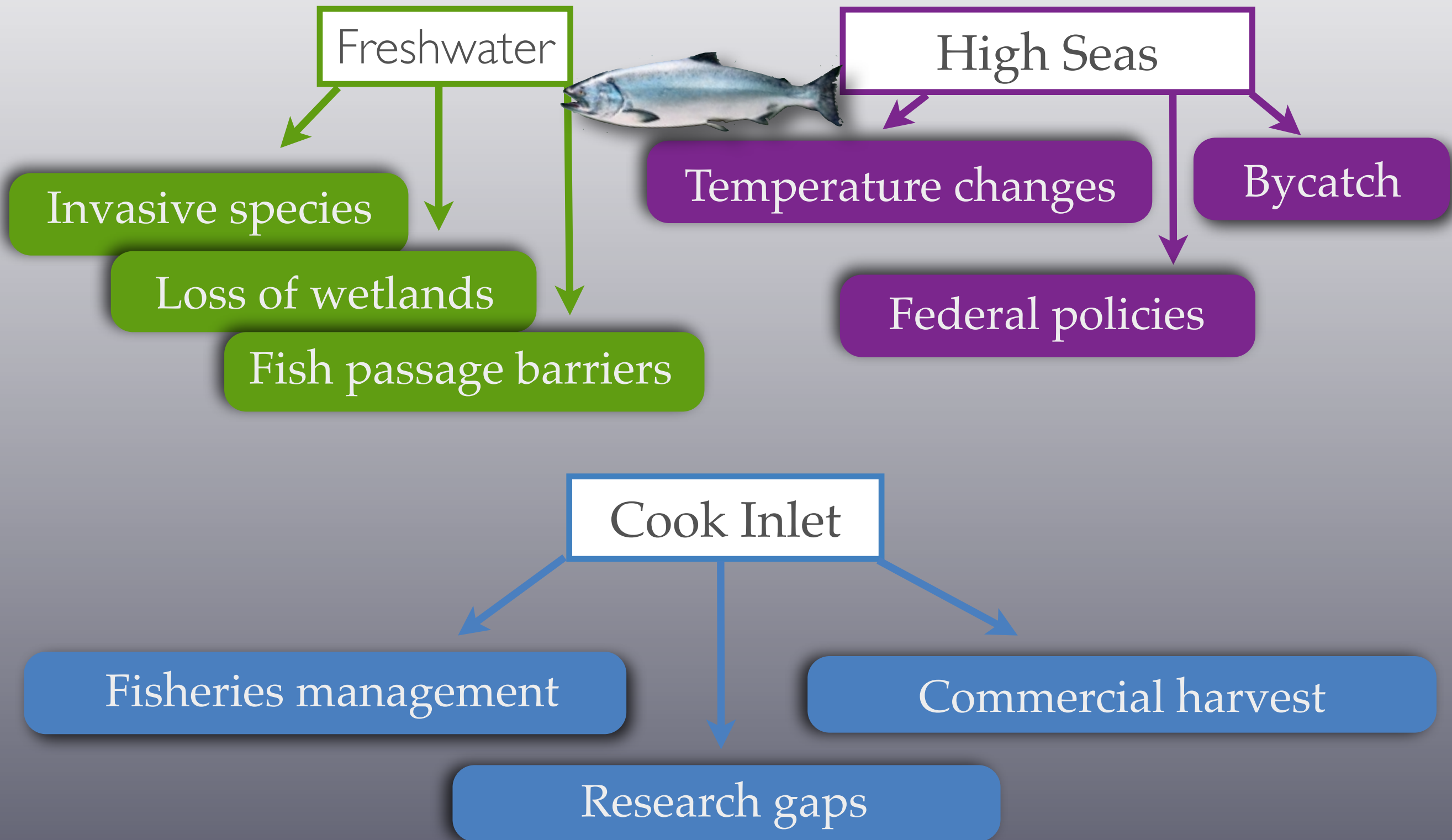
Low Salmon Abundance



HIGH SEAS

Environmental Changes (temperature) and/or bycatch

Causes for low Salmon Abundance in Upper Cook Inlet



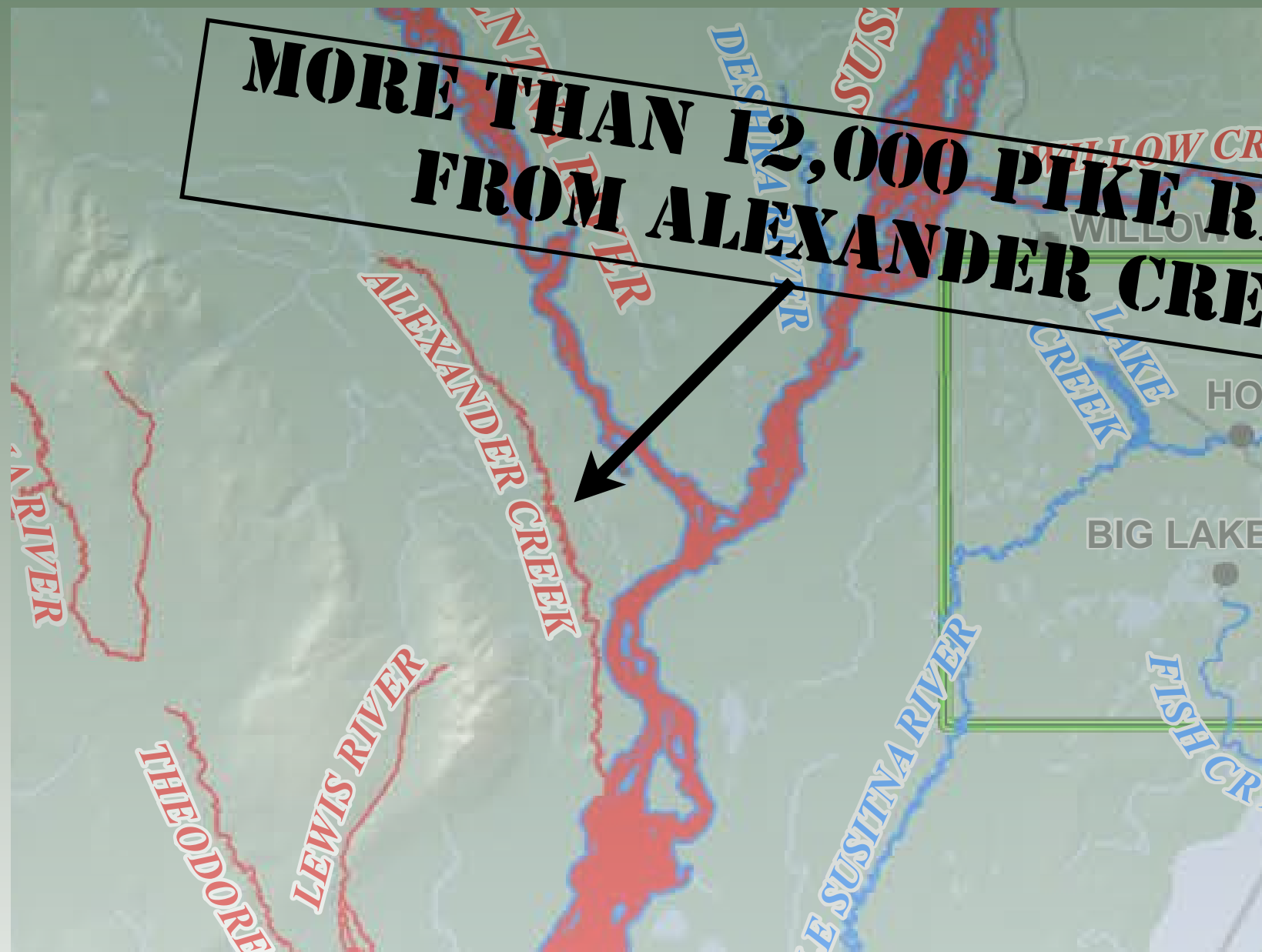
Causes For Low Salmon Abundance



86 culverts replaced for Salmon Passage

The culvert area is to the east of the Mat-Su's major fish waters

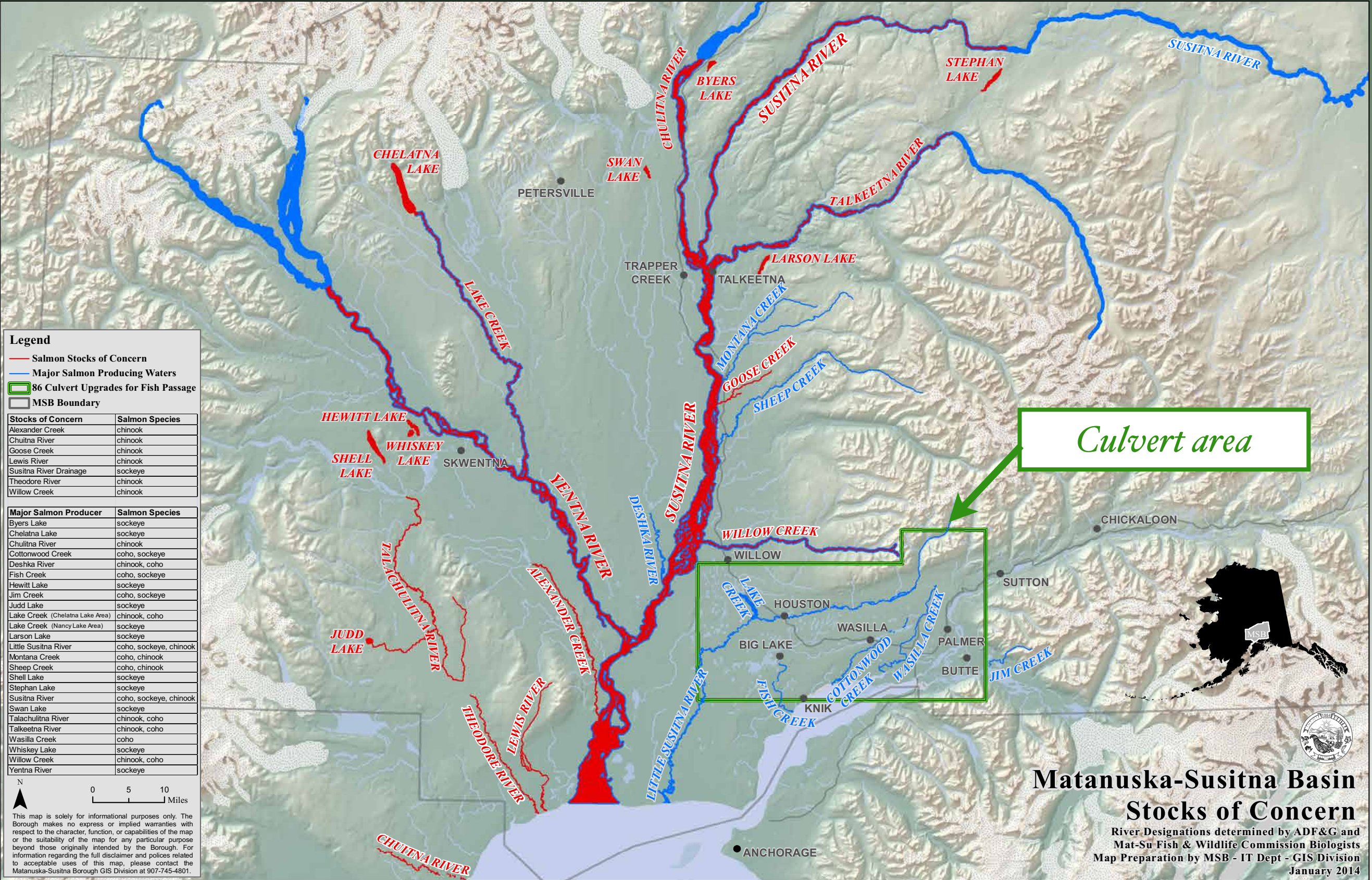
Pike Suppression in the Mat-Su



ADF & G multi-year program

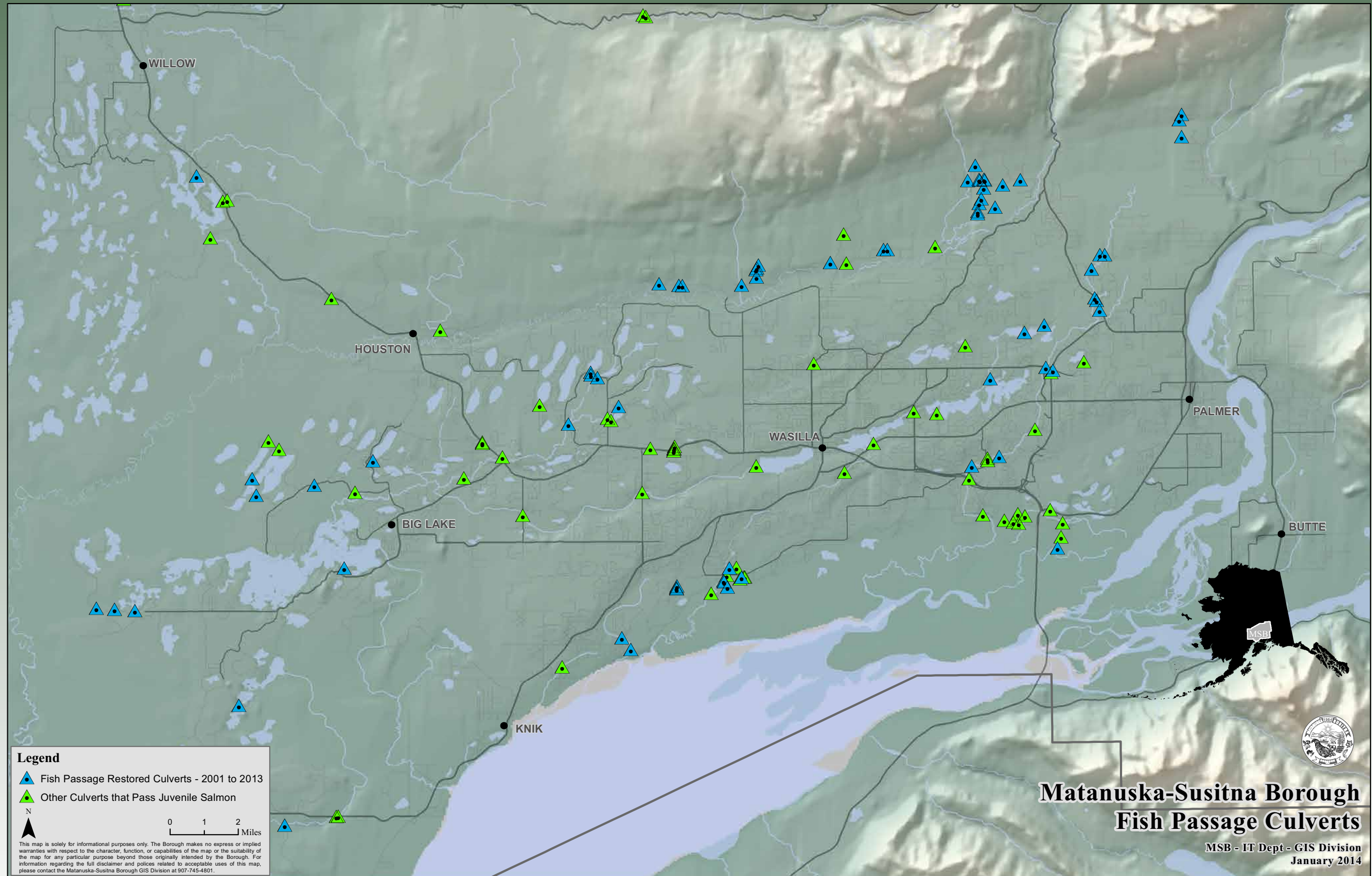
2013 Minnow trapping studies indicate juvenile salmon recolonizing

Major fish producing waters

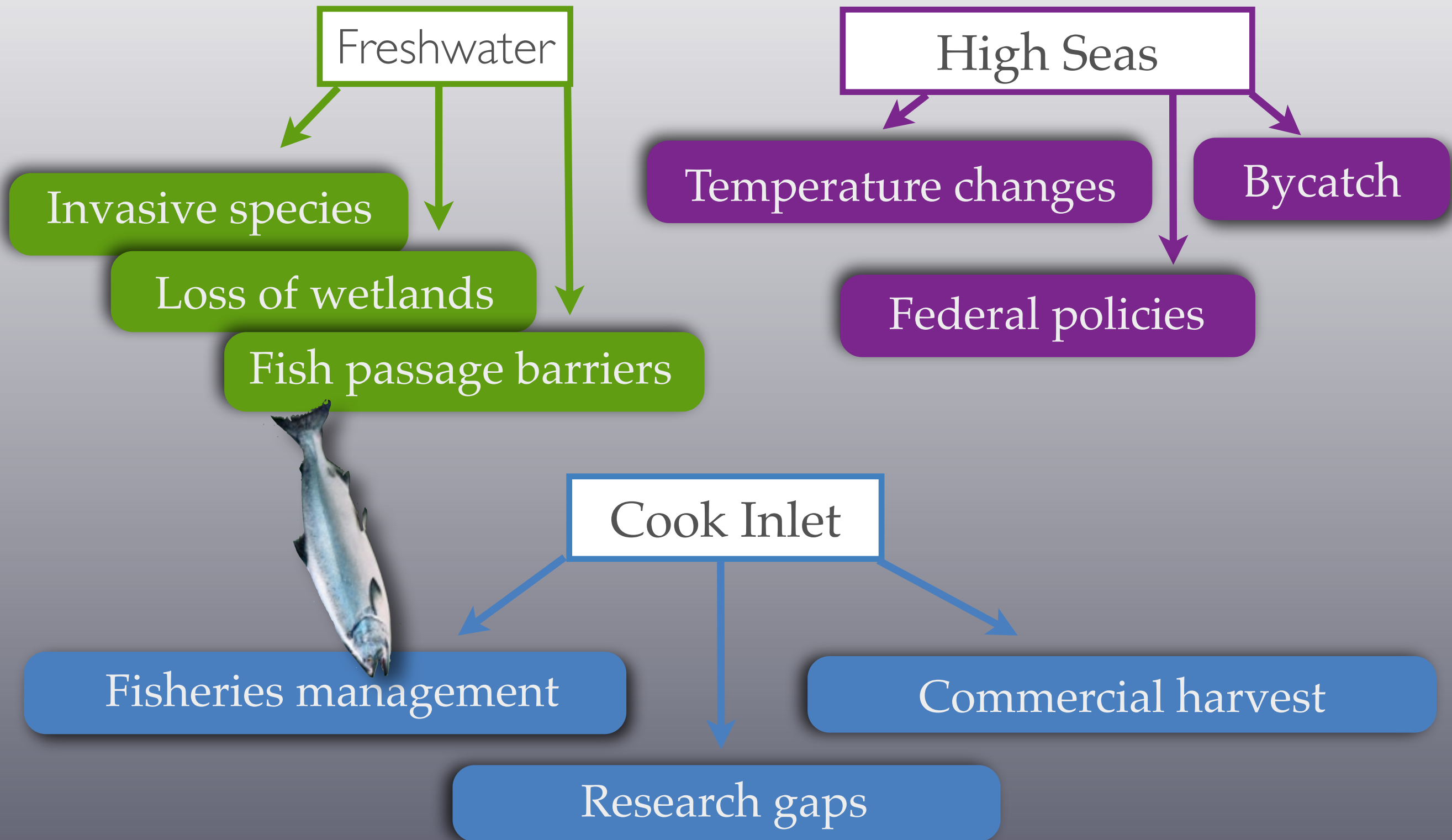


(Red shows stocks of concern)

Fish passage culverts



Causes for low Salmon Abundance in Upper Cook Inlet



Causes For Low Salmon Abundance



Running the UCI gauntlet

Fisheries management allows over harvest in gill net fishery targeting Kenai Sockeye

CAUSES FOR LOW SALMON ABUNDANCE

UCI Northern District salmon are not getting through commercial fishing gauntlet in sufficient numbers.

ADF&G lacks in-season management tools for UCI mixed stock fishery

Lack of **genetic identification** of salmon species other than sockeye

UCI Fisheries management is **focused on Kenai sockeye**



SOLUTIONS

1) Revise Upper Cook Inlet management plans

Update plans to insure sustained yield for UCI for both northern district and central district salmon

2) Discreet stock harvest zones

Restructure UCI commercial fishery to be more similar to Bristol Bay commercial fishery - most successful salmon fishery in the world

3) Maintain UCI Conservation Corridor

Retain and refine conservation corridor established by BOF

4) Genetic and Acoustic Research

Identify timing/movement/location of all 5 salmon species in UCI

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Bristol Bay Fisheries

Commercial fishery subdistricts



World's most successful salmon fishery

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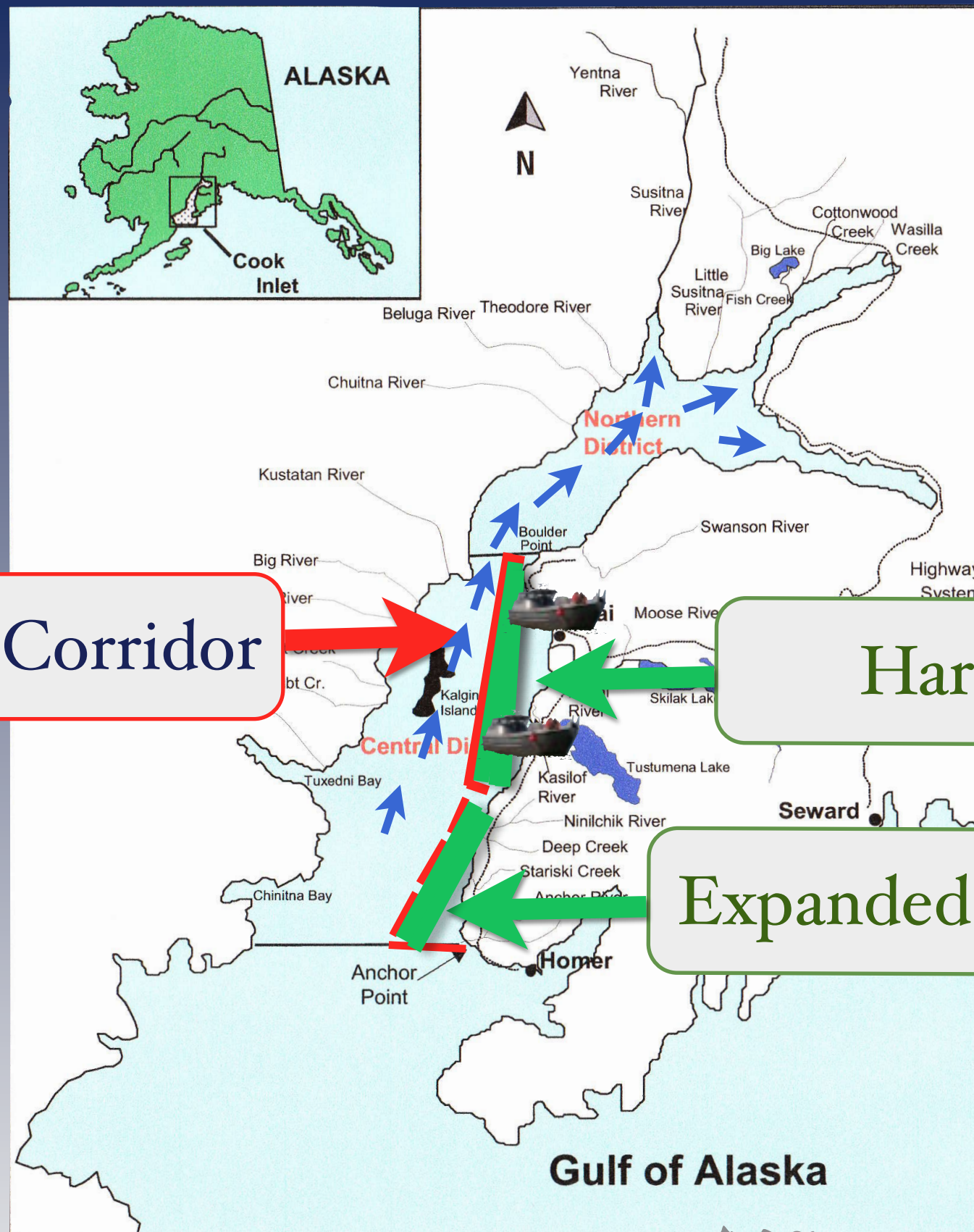
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Conservation Corridor

Harvest Zone

Expanded Harvest Zone

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(New) Off-Shore Test Fishery



For genetic stock identification

State Capital Funding To MSB

\$2.5 million, FY 2014

Science and Research

Genetic Sampling of all Cook Inlet salmon species to supplement research being done by ADF&G to better inform management of mixed stock fishery

UCI Fisheries Data Gap Analysis to identify research needs



Fish Passage

Projects to replace culverts to restore access for 12.2 miles of salmon habitat.
Funds matched by grants and borough funds

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION NEXT STEPS



- ☐ \$2.5 million State Legislative funding request for FY 2015
- for research and habitat projects
- ☒ MSB Fish Research Program - conduct studies on UCI fisheries, data gap analysis
- ☒ 2014 BOF meeting - advocated for policies to improve UCI fisheries management for all users

Contacts

MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission

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