

SCR 8

SCR 9

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SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 9
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATOR EGAN

Introduced: 3/28/11

Referred: Resources

A RESOLUTION

1 **Creating the Taku River Task Force as a joint legislative task force.**

2 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

3 **WHEREAS** the Taku River is Southeast Alaska's largest overall salmon producer,
4 with the region's largest run of coho and chinook salmon and significant runs of sockeye,
5 chum, and pink salmon, and eulachon; and

6 **WHEREAS** the state tide and submerged land of the Taku River are crucial to the
7 spawning, incubation, and rearing of all five species of wild Pacific salmon, trout, and char;
8 and

9 **WHEREAS** private recreational property in the Taku River valley represents a
10 valued cultural element of the area; and

11 **WHEREAS** existing property rights, uses, and access must be protected in all future
12 plans for the Taku River area; and

13 **WHEREAS** data from the Department of Fish and Game indicates that 40 to 50
14 percent of juvenile salmon in the Taku River watershed are reared below the confluence of the
15 Tulsequah River, with the majority of juvenile king salmon rearing occurring in the main
16 channel of the lower Taku River; and

1 **WHEREAS** personal use and sport hunting, fishing, and trapping, and the use of
2 recreational personal watercraft and vehicles and aircraft constitute longstanding uses of the
3 Taku River valley; and

4 **WHEREAS** those uses should be protected and secured for future generations; and

5 **WHEREAS** the Alaska portion of the Taku River supports significant personal use,
6 commercial, and sport fisheries, generating over 400 fishing-related jobs, an estimated
7 \$8,000,000 of annual income from commercial and recreational fishing activity, and more
8 than \$25,000,000 from all activities associated with those fisheries; and

9 **WHEREAS** established businesses use the Taku River to provide supplies to
10 recreational property owners and engage in tourism and sport fishing enterprises on the Taku
11 River; and

12 **WHEREAS** past proposals to use the Taku River as an industrial transportation
13 corridor involving conventional tug and barge systems or unconventional barges and large
14 wheeled or tracked vehicles introduced significant risk of damage to the river bottom not
15 generated by existing uses of the river's resources; and

16 **WHEREAS** industrial transportation systems pose significant risks to important fish
17 spawning, incubation, and rearing habitats, could degrade water quality, and may disrupt the
18 ice cover, all of which would be detrimental to the habitat; and

19 **WHEREAS** user groups such as private recreational property owners, commercial,
20 charter, sport and personal use fishermen, seafood processors, and other local businesses have
21 expressed significant concerns over recent proposals to permit industrial transportation
22 systems on the Taku River;

23 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Taku River Task Force is created as a joint task force of
24 the Alaska State Legislature; and be it

25 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall be composed of eight members, as
26 follows:

- 27 (1) the senator from Senate District B;
- 28 (2) the representatives from House District 3 and House District 4;
- 29 (3) the commissioner of fish and game or the commissioner's designee;
- 30 (4) four members of the public, appointed jointly by the President of the
31 Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives as follows:

1 (A) one owner of private recreational property in the Taku River
2 valley;

3 (B) one holder of a commercial fishing permit for registration area A;

4 (C) one owner or employee of a business that derives significant
5 income from transportation to or within the Taku River;

6 (D) one person who uses but does not consume Taku River resources;
7 and be it

8 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the
9 House of Representatives shall jointly appoint the chair and vice-chair of the task force; and
10 be it

11 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall seek the professional opinions of
12 research and management personnel from the Department of Fish and Game and the
13 Department of Natural Resources in carrying out its duties; and be it

14 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the duties of the task force shall be to

15 (1) review biological data on Taku River fish and game resources;

16 (2) work cooperatively with appropriate federal, state, and local government
17 agencies to ensure monitoring of industrial vessel traffic on the Taku River;

18 (3) determine how best to protect the Taku's unique resources and maintain
19 the general productivity of Taku River habitat while providing for recreational and other uses;

20 (4) recommend public policy options to ensure the proper protection of Taku
21 River resources; and be it

22 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that Taku River Task Force meetings shall be open to the
23 public; and be it

24 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall submit a report of its findings to the
25 legislature not later than December 1, 2011; and be it

26 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall be terminated on January 31, 2012.



SENATOR DENNIS EGAN

SCR 8
Taku River Task Force

Sponsor Statement

Taku River resources are critical to the economic and cultural foundations of Juneau and make significant contributions to the Southeast region.

The river provides some of the most important salmon habitat in Alaska, directly supporting over 400 commercial fishing-related jobs, along with sport and personal use harvests. All five species of salmon spawn in the river along with eulachon. King, coho and sockeye salmon rear within its banks.

Many local charter and sport fishing businesses depend on the river. Private cabin owners recreate along the river as part of a long-standing traditional use of the Taku watershed. Transportation and tourism businesses operate there.

In recent years, many citizens of the area have become very concerned about protecting the Taku River due to growing industrial-scale use of the river as a barging route. This provided the catalyst for citizens to start talking about how best to manage and protect the unique area and ensure it is available for future generations to play, work, gather food and make a living.

The Taku River Task Force will be a public forum for community input on how best to protect recreational uses and fish and wildlife habitat within the river. Its report and recommendations will be due to the legislature by December 1, 2011.

ALASKA SENATE

STATE CAPITOL • JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-1182 • (907) 465-4947 • FAX (907) 465-2108
SENATOR.DENNIS.EGAN@LEGIS.STATE.AK.US

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Honorable Senator Dennis Egan
State Capitol Room 510
Juneau, Alaska 99801

February 14th, 2011

2/14/2011

Dear Senator Egan,

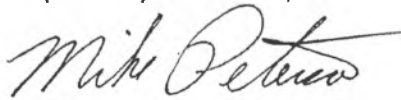
The Juneau Douglas Fish and Game Advisory Committee (J-D F&G AC) has met on two occasions, January 28th, with approximately 150 members of the public attending, and February 8, with approximately 20 members of the public attending. These meetings provided important opportunities to hear concerns from the Taku River Recreation Association and the Taku River Working Group (an ad-hoc group of Taku River stakeholder), complimented with input from Alaska Fish and Game staff, regarding legislation to protect Taku River habitat.

The J-D F&G AC is a local Fish and Game committee that provides a forum for the collection and expression of opinions on matters relating to the management of fish and wildlife resources. The J-D F&G AC is comprised of 15 dedicated seats that represent local use interests including trapping, freshwater charter fishing, fish processing, commercial fishing, sport fishing/personal use/hunting, non-consumptive personal use, saltwater charter fishing, non-consumptive-commercial, and hunting guides.

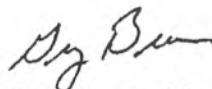
After hearing from invested parties, and discussion by committee members, the J-D F&G AC voted unanimously to support the collaboration of all stakeholders in moving forward with fish and wildlife habitat protection on state waters and lands within the Taku River Valley through the legislative process during the 2011-2012 legislative sessions.

As reflected by the unanimous vote, we view the Taku River Valley as a unique ecosystem that supports a vital public and regional resource. We believe that legislative action is warranted to further protect that ecosystem and those resources.

Respectfully Submitted,



Mike Peterson- Chair



Greg Brown- Vice-Chair

Juneau-Douglas Fish & Game Advisory Committee 2011 Roster on reverse side.

Cc: Rep. Beth Kerttula
Rep. Kathy Munoz.
F & G Comm. Cora Campbell
F & G Board Support
Taku River Working Group
TRRA

Juneau Douglas Fish & Game Advisory Committee

Membership Roster as of February 14 2011

Barry Brokken:	Trapping	2011
Chris Casey:	Charter Fishing-Freshwater	2011
Jason Kohlhase:	Processor	2011
Kirk Hardcastle:	Commercial Fishing	2011
Erik Clark:	Sport Fish/Hunting/Personal Use	2011
Henry Webb	Alternate(one year)	2011
Forest Wagner	Alternate(one year)	2011
Chris Miller:	Commercial Fishing	2012
Jenny Pursell:	Non-Consumptive-Personal	2012
Todd Wicks:	Charter Fishing-Saltwater	2012
Mike Bethers:	Sport Fish/Hunting/Personal Use	2012
Bill Bahleda:	Sport Fish/Hunting/Personal Use	2012
Mike Peterson: (Chair):	Sport Fish/Hunting/Personal Use	2013
Chris Conder:	Charter Fishing-Saltwater	2013
Greg Brown: (Vice-Chair)	Non-Consumptive-Commercial	2013
Thatcher Brouwer:	Commercial Fishing	2013
Vacant:	Hunting Guide	2013

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Sunday, February 24, 2008
Story last updated at 2/24/2008 - 4:15 am

Hoverbarge plan worries Taku River users

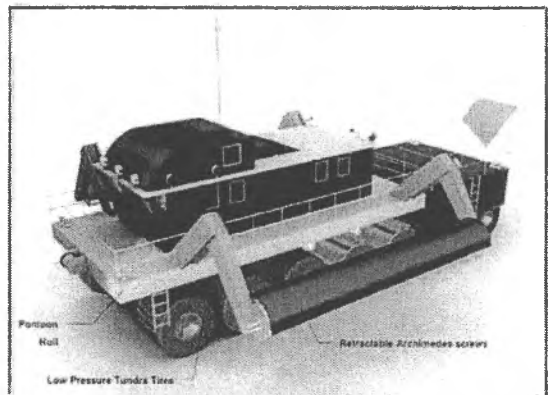
By Kate Golden | JUNEAU EMPIRE

Cabin owner Errol Champion is more pessimistic and worried than ever after spending the last week driving snowmachines on the Taku River.

He is one of the many river users waiting for more information about the hoverbarge and newly invented Amphitrac, which the Tulsequah Chief Mine operators have proposed for hauling supplies and ore on the Taku River.

"Part of the river still has ice, but is covered with overflow and surely will not hold the pressures of the ACB (hoverbarge)," Champion said. "And the Amphitrac will be clawing its way along, making a complete mess of the river channel. ... The results are unknown, but it cannot be good."

Redfern Resources Ltd. is expected to take at least two or three weeks to provide more information on how these vehicles may affect the salmon-rich river. About 400 fishermen and seafood industry workers rely on the Taku for their livelihood.



Proposed vessel: The new Amphitrac was specifically designed for use on the Taku River.

Click Thumbnails to View



Environmentalists and state permitters are worried the experimental vessels will hurt fish and other wildlife. Rivers Without Borders, a national conservation group headquartered in Juneau, paid for a study that says the company's claims of minimal damage are unfounded.

Meanwhile, Redfern, based in Vancouver, British Columbia, has produced pictures for the public showing a feather-light footprint for the hoverbarge - with one pound per square inch pressure, less than an eighth of the pressure of a human footprint.

"They have all their environmental documents saying it's not going to cause this problem, that problem or the other problem," said biologist Jackie Timothy of the Office of Habitat Management and Permitting in the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. "We need to see if they can make good on that."

On this side of the border, Redfern's plan is unusual and requires much less paperwork than most projects because it involves no federal lands. The barge system would transport people, ore and goods between Juneau and the multi-metal mine, which is on the Tulsequah River and about 40 miles northeast of Juneau.

State permitters said they're trying to compensate for the work the federal government would ordinarily do.

"It's kind of like we're doing the EIS (environmental impact statement) because there is no federal permit involved," said Joe Donohue, the lead reviewer for the Alaska Coastal Management Program.

Shallow waters, ice operations

"When there's plenty of water in the river, we're basically talking about conventional navigation," said Tom Crafford, large mine permit coordinator for the Department of Natural Resources. The barge would be pulled by a tug in the summer.

"Low-water operations - that, I think, is the real issue," he said, particularly when there's ice.

Moose and other animals travel across the frozen river in the winter, and juvenile salmon grow up under the protection of the ice. The timing of spring break-up and flood levels all affect wildlife's chances of survival.

Champion, on the river last week, wrote in an e-mail that while the ice has been melting, the animals can still run across it.

But he has trouble imagining how a 750-ton loaded hoverbarge and the Amphitrac that pulls and pushes it would avoid creating open leads and ice dams. Moose would get stuck. People wouldn't be able to cross.

The problem is expressed by Michel Lapointe, professor of geography at McGill University and director of the Centre Interuniversitaire de Recherche sur le Saumon Atlantique in Montreal, Canada, in the Rivers Without Borders report:

"Any such changes to breakup flooding regime can have far-reaching, ecosystem-level effects on fish and wildlife habitat," Lapointe wrote.

Originally Redfern and the state proposed testing the vessel system in Southeast in the winter. But the company announced recently that construction delays make it likely the Amphitrac will not arrive on the river until after the ice melts. That means the system could be permitted before it is tested on ice.

Redfern's operations plan says the vessels would avoid open leads in the ice cover. The company also plans to document which areas have the sketchiest ice cover and which are more stable, record how long it takes to form ice, and adjust all operations as necessary.

"That will be something we'll be working with DNR to address," said Redfern spokeswoman Salina Landstad.

Critics, however, say it's an example of testing that shouldn't be done on the Taku.

Donohue of the coastal management program said this week that a likely condition of a needed land-use permit would be that if the vessels kept ice from forming, they would not be allowed on the river at that point.

Testing the company's claims

State permitters haven't seen a picture of the Amphitrac yet, because it doesn't exist. The Amphitrac was invented for the Taku River. It has soft tires used elsewhere for tundra travel; Archimedes screws, a propulsion device that pushes water through pipes on either side of the vessel; and steel screws for moving across ice.

In the summer, a tug would move the hoverbarge. In the winter and shoulder seasons, the Amphitrac would do the job, pushing or pulling the 88-foot-wide, unmanned barge. A powerboat may go ahead of them and scout out the route.

The company has told the state it may use two Amphitracs and two hoverbarges. But state permitters said they weren't sure how this would work and were waiting for more information.

"If the vessels make it to Juneau, that means they meet or exceed the manufacturers' claims about performance and minimal environmental impacts," Timothy of the habitat office wrote in an e-mail.

Redfern says it has devised plans to prevent environmental damage. According to its November 2007 operating plan, the vessels would, among other protective measures:

- Avoid - as opposed to "minimize" - creating new channels.
- Avoid disturbing the sand flats on the shallowest 17-mile stretch, on the U.S. side, upstream from Annex Creek to the Taku Lodge.
- Avoid eulachon, or hooligan, and salmon spawning areas.
- Minimize the potential for stranding juvenile fish with waves from the vessels.
- Minimize resuspension of sediment and bank erosion from the vessels' wake.
- Minimize noise effects on fish and marine mammals such as seals, which congregate in the spring at the edge of the ice.

The American Bureau of Shipping will test the vessels on the Columbia River on standards that Donohue of the Coastal Management Program described as "relatively stringent."

Then they'll be brought to Southeast Alaska and tried at Sheep Creek and Eagle River Beach, just south of Juneau.

These areas are not similar to the Taku in many respects, said Donohue, who grew up fishing on that river.

But they are visible from the road system, which means that residents as well as permitters would be able to see the vessels at work. Donohue will be watching, for example, the turning radius, how long the vessels take to stop and how they move over gravel.

"We're like everyone else," he said. "We're waiting to see how this thing's going to work."

Sheep Creek is a salmon stream, so testing would be done only when the fish are absent, Donohue said.

From there, if permits are granted, the Taku is the testing area. The permit would last for a year and include an environmental monitoring program that Redfern is working on now.

Creative monitoring

There are challenges to that environmental monitoring for which Redfern will have to get creative, according to Timothy.

An example: Young salmon tend to stay under large woody debris and in slower, safer water. Redfern says it won't move those woody snags in the river; they're more of a problem on the Canadian side of the river. But fry also may hang out in the main channel on the sand flats, where Redfern proposes to go. The waters of the Taku are often opaque from silt.

How would they be able to tell when they're damaging salmon fry that can't be seen?

"That's a very good question and one we have asked the company to explain," Timothy wrote.

She mentioned one possibility of having an environmental monitor walk along the beach to check for fry being thrown or washed ashore.

Redfern spokeswoman Salina Landstad said the answer would involve watching spray that's made by the vehicles.

"If the water is spraying, then it's essentially clear," she said, meaning it would be easy to see fry.

'Revokable at will'

The state would reserve the right to pull Redfern's permit at any time.

"This gives the state of Alaska a hook into the whole system," said Donohue of the coastal management program.

"If they were constantly breaking through the ice, we can yank that permit," Crafford said.

Landstad emphasized the permit process is a chance for Redfern to hear and respond to all of the state's concerns and she's confident the company will do so.

Such statements do not reassure Taku River users, who say the damage would have already been done at that point.

• Contact reporter Kate Golden at 523-2276 or kate.golden@juneauempire.com.

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Wednesday, December 10, 2008

Story last updated at 12/10/2008 - 9:32 am

Redfern barge plan for Taku River under review

Fishermen and others still concerned about the effects of vehicles

By Kate Golden | JUNEAU EMPIRE

State permiters this month are reviewing Redfern Resources Ltd.'s revised plan to haul mine supplies and ore on the Taku River year round.

This is the Vancouver company's second application. The state terminated the first one this summer after the company changed the tow vehicles it planned to use to haul an air-cushion barge across Taku ice.

The first plan generated widespread concern among sport and commercial fishermen and other users of the salmon-rich river. More than 250 people attended the last public meeting in February.

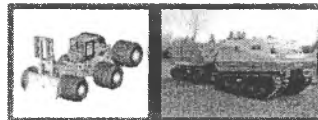
Tim Davies of Redfern said the new plan was designed to address those concerns.



Courtesy P

Change of plans: Redfern Resources Ltd. has replaced a designer amphibious tow vehicle with two that already exist, including the one pictured above, which the company calls an "amphibious tractor." The "tracked articulated vehicle" operates in "nearly all terrain," the company said.

Click Thumbnails to View



Know and Go

What: Public information session on a plan to barg mine supplies and ore on the Taku River.

When: 6:30-9:30 p.m. Thursday.

"Everything, from the equipment to the monitoring plan, was designed to avoid (impact) or accommodate concerns," he said.

Where: Ballroom 3, Centennial Hall in downtown Juneau.

Public comments must be submitted from scratch. The public can learn about the project Thursday at Centennial

The permits

Redfern needs two permits from the state, for travel over land and through fish habitat. The project also goes through an Alaska coastal zone consistency review.

The last permit process was plagued by delays. This time, Redfern worked in a "prereview" process with state permitters to submit a more complete application.

That's not a prejudging of its merits, said permitters.

"Agency representatives are very careful to make sure that there's no kind of prereview approvals going on," said Crafford, the large mine permitting coordinator at the Department of Natural Resources.

Redfern is owned by Vancouver-based Redcorp Ventures Ltd.

Barging on the Taku

A marine barge will haul materials between the mine's Juneau office at Alaska Marine Lines and the mouth of the Taku.

There, the barge's load will be transferred to an air cushion barge, also called a hoverbarge.

The barge can't power itself. It will be shuttled by four "amphibious tractors" - either tracked or with big, soft, float-like Rolligon-like tires, two in front and two behind - to the barge landing site on the Tulsequah River.

Sixteen miles of the 28-mile route are in Alaska.

From late May to October, the hoverbarge will be moved with a shallow draft tug boat.

The trickiest part is at Canyon Island. On the west is a deeper but narrow channel. On the east is a shallow, braided area with a shifting gravel bar.

In the new summer plan, the tug will hand off the barge at Canyon Island to the amphibious vehicles, which will haul around the east side. Meanwhile the tug takes the deeper channel and reconnects with the barge at the other end.

In the winter, the hoverbarge will be pushed and pulled over the frozen river floodplain by the four amphibious tractors over the ice of the Taku. Snowmachines or another tracked vehicle may groom the snow and provide crew change and emergency support.

The Taku's habitat for salmon, hooligan and other species is arguably most vulnerable in the shoulder seasons of fall and spring, when the ice that protects the river is forming or thawing.

Redfern's Davies said the new plan is more definite about when the company will cease operations altogether for shoulder seasons.

Winter operations will stop, for example, when open leads are too many or too wide for the amphibious vehicles - which have very limited propulsion in water - and won't restart until the river has a minimum flow.

"Most people would agree that's a good thing," Crafford said. "Those are the really difficult times of the year to operate, and the times of the year which you would most likely be disturbing the land the greatest. The new proposal in that sense is, I think, good news."

"It does create a different set of issues," he said, including the "additional complexity" of handing off the air cushion barge around Canyon Island.

Noise and wake

Two of the biggest concerns from Taku users this year were the noise and the wake the barge will produce.

Redfern's plan says the vehicles' engines will be muffled and enclosed, and says they won't be louder than 70 decibels at 100 feet. (Seventy decibels is perhaps twice as loud as ordinary conversation.)

They'll also have minimal wake, according to the company.

State permitters will require the system to be tested in Juneau to verify that's all true before allowing the vehicles the Taku.

Environmental monitoring

The plan calls for environmental monitoring that will be refined in the first few years "to the extent practical."

Redfern is required by Canadian permitters as well as Alaskans to monitor bank erosion, the turbidity of fish habitat and whether juvenile salmon are being stranded. The permitters have been coordinating their efforts, Crafford said.

The company will also conduct "annual follow-up with property owners, commercial tourism operators, commercial fishers and other users of the river ... to ensure concerns regarding barging operations can be addressed in a timely manner," according to the plan.

Questioning the plan

Concerns remain among Taku users.

Rivers Without Borders field coordinator Chris Zimmer said the company has shown the last two summers, with conventional barging, that it's not prepared to deal with the difficult Taku. Groundings are not uncommon for much smaller vehicles on this braided, shallow, dynamic river, he said.

The winter, he said, is likely to be even tougher. And these vehicles have never been used in concert.

"Redfern simply hasn't proven they can operate this barge safely in the Taku, given the novelty of the proposal on the dynamic Taku," Zimmer said. "It's quite a fleet of different vehicles out there, and it kind of strikes me as a Keystone Cops routine."

Zimmer hired scientists to examine Redfern's previous plan for shortcomings, and is doing so for this one as well.

Could Redfern come up with a Taku plan that would satisfy Zimmer?

"There may be, but we sure as hell haven't seen it yet," he said.

Karl Vander of the Taku River Cabin Owners Association said his group's main discussions over the last year have been the "headache" of the Tulsequah Chief plans. He doesn't think the barge will be controllable in the infamous Taku winds.

"We think it's a harebrained scheme. It's just basically going to chew up the river."

"I don't want anybody to think that we're anti-mine," he added.

Redfern's Tim Davies vowed to address Taku users' concerns.

"When a project has the potential to impact people's lifestyles, they have every right to raise concerns," Davies said. "If people bring concerns or information to us, we will look at it seriously."

The public process

Zimmer and others are concerned that the permit process is shorter this time around: 30 days instead of 50.

"We've got the agencies doing a bare-minimum review here, and I think the Taku - the most important salmon river in Southeast Alaska - deserves more," Zimmer said.

State permitter Crafford said the original 50-day review was "a mistake."

He also noted that state permitters can stop the clock to ask for more information, and were already preparing to do so.

Thursday's public meeting is scheduled a week after the state announced its formal review had begun. That has garnered grumbles among fishermen and others who haven't had time to read the operations plan yet.

But Crafford said it was necessary, because permitters want to hear the public's concerns before they ask the company for more information - and that deadline, in the shorter schedule, is next Tuesday.

"It would look a bit like a sham if it's after the fact, and you can't ask any questions or require anything more that come out of that meeting," Crafford said.

• Contact reporter Kate Golden at kate.golden@juneauempire.com.

March 25, 2011

Senator Thomas Wagoner
Co-Chair, Senate Resources Committee
State Capitol, Room 427
Juneau, AK 99801

Senator Joe Paskvan
Co-Chair, Senate Resources Committee
State Capitol, Room 115
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Senate Resolution to Establish a Taku River Task Force

Dear Senators Wagoner and Paskvan:

The undersigned organizations, businesses and individuals have long been involved in issues related to fisheries and fish habitat in the Taku River. We urge the Legislature to support the Senate Resolution establishing a Taku River Task Force and to ensure its passage this session

The Taku is Southeast Alaska's largest overall salmon producer, with Southeast's largest run of coho and king salmon, and a vital regional economic, cultural and recreational resource. Annual salmon runs can top 2 million wild fish. The sport and commercial fisheries contribute over \$7 million to the regional economy and support hundreds of jobs. Recreation and tourism provides another \$18 million annually. The importance of the Taku to Southeast Alaska requires the highest level of habitat protection to ensure the productivity of the Taku for future generations.

The Resolution would create a Task Force whose mission is to determine the appropriate protections for the habitat and water quality of the Taku and to recommend public policy options to provide such protections, while also ensuring that existing property rights, uses, and access are maintained. This mission enjoys deep and diverse support in Juneau from commercial and sport fishermen, fishing businesses, subsistence users, property owners and many others. It is an effective way to ensure the long-term health of the Taku River and its fisheries, and to ensure a vibrant economy and jobs for Juneau. Most importantly, the Taku River Task Force will involve all stakeholders in examining the issues and recommending policy decisions to the Legislature.

We are also concerned about the possible use of the Taku as an industrial transportation corridor for industrial barging to and from British Columbia. Previous experience shows such barging poses threats to habitat and water quality because of the inherent difficulty of navigating such vessels in the Taku due to low visibility, shallows, heavy current and a braided, dynamic and frequently changing river. One purpose of the Task Force is to recommend ways to ensure that such industrial barging does not degrade salmon habitat and harm Taku fisheries.

We would appreciate your support for the Taku's productive fisheries and for protecting the interests of its many stakeholders.

Sincerely,

Dale Kelley, Executive Director, Alaska
Trollers Association

Mark Hieronymus, Partner / Operations
Manager, Northern Keta Caviar, Inc.

Tony Soltys, President
Raincountry Flyfishers

Ron Maas, Taku property owner and
former owner of Taku Lodge

Eric Prestegard, Executive Director,
Douglas Island Pink & Chum

Renee and Winston Warr, Taku River Reds

Carl Rosier, former ADF&G
Commissioner

Frank Rue, former ADF&G
Commissioner

Elizabeth Dubovsky, President,
Slow Food Southeast Alaska

Will Patric, Executive Director, Rivers
Without Borders

Mark Kaelke, Southeast Alaska Project
Director Trout Unlimited

Sandro Lane, Seafood Entrepreneur

Chris Knight, Executive Director,
United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters

Len Peterson, Heather Hardcastle, Kirk
Hardcastle, Taku River Reds

Chris Casey, professional fishing and bear-
viewing guide

Chris Miller, commercial fisherman and
professional photographer

Eric Norman, V.P. & G.M.,
Taku Fisheries/Smokeries

Jev Shelton, Taku gillnetter

Carl Schrader, former ADF&G
Habitat biologist

Brad Elfers, owner,
Juneau Flyfishing Goods

Chris Zimmer, President, Juneau Chapter of
Trout Unlimited

Captain Greg Brown,
Weather Permitting Alaska

Michael Kohan, sport fisherman and UAF
School of Fisheries Masters Student

Mary Jackson

From: Sen. Tom Wagoner
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2011 11:01 AM
To: Mary Jackson
Subject: FW: Personal Letter about SCR8 Taku River

From: Ron Haffner [<mailto:desnorth@aol.com>]
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2011 10:23 AM
To: Sen. Tom Wagoner
Subject: Personal Letter about SCR8 Taku River

4/28/2011

Dear Senator,

On behalf of my family and Takuriver.com, I would like to express by disappointment that Senator, Dennis Egan along with his staff has decided to introduce SCR8. SCR8 is attempting to limit the use of the Taku River by designating it "Critical Habitat". Not only is the material being used to support this, weak and dated, but I believe SCR8 is being used as a stepping stone to more restrictive use in the future, such as a "Wild and Scenic" designation.

There are already enough laws in place to take care of any environmental issues or improper use of the Taku River, and the last thing we need are more laws or restrictions to hamper our current enjoyment of this great place. I am urging you with all due respect, to reject this legislation.

Sincerely,

Ronald J Haffner and Family

907-723-1008

Mary Jackson

From: Sen. Tom Wagoner
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2011 8:44 AM
To: Mary Jackson
Subject: FW: SCR 8

From: CHERIEKEN@aol.com [<mailto:CHERIEKEN@aol.com>]
Sent: Sunday, March 27, 2011 1:00 PM
To: Sen. Tom Wagoner
Subject: Fwd: SCR 8

From: CHERIEKEN@aol.com
To: cherieken@aol.com
Sent: 3/26/2011 1:28:10 P.M. Alaskan Daylight Time
Subj: Fwd: SCR 8

From: CHERIEKEN@aol.com
To: [Senator Bill Wielechowski@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Senator_Bill_Wielechowski@legis.state.ak.us), [Senator Joe Paskvan@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Senator_Joe_Paskvan@legis.state.ak.us),
[Senator Bert Stedman@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Senator_Bert_Stedman@legis.state.ak.us), [Senator Lesil McGuire@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Senator_Lesil_McGuire@legis.state.ak.us),
[Senator Gary Stevens@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Senator_Gary_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us), [Senator Hollis French@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Senator_Hollis_French@legis.state.ak.us)
BCC: takuconways@ak.net, errol.champion@acsalaska.net, karl@northpacificerectors.com
Sent: 3/26/2011 11:49:54 A.M. Alaskan Daylight Time
Subj: Re: SCR 8

To: Senate Resource Committee
From: Taku River Recreation Association

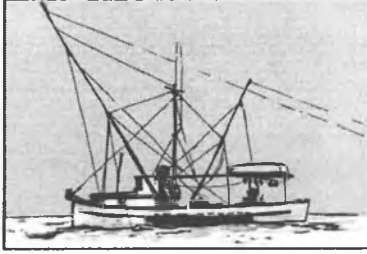
Taku River Recreation Association (T.R.R.A.) was advised on Friday, March 25, 6:30 p.m., by Jesse Kiehl of the plan to introduce SCR 8, establishing a Taku River Task Force.

T.R.R.A. was organized in the 1990's to represent the interests of the property owners and users of the resources of the Taku River Valley.

T.R.R.A. has been excluded from any input into drafting of SCR 8.

T.R.R.A. remains adamantly opposed to the resolution and will provide testimony at the hearing on Monday, March 27th.

Cherie Rudolph
President
Taku River Recreation Association



Alaska Trollers Association

130 Seward #205
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 586-9400 phone
(907) 586-4473 fax
ata@gci.net

March 27, 2011

Senator Joe Paskvan, Co-Chair
Senator Thomas Wagoner
Senate Resources
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Chairmen Paskvan, Wagoner, and Committee Members:

The Alaska Trollers Association (ATA) supports formation of a Taku River Task Force, to review options that may exist to afford the Taku enhanced protection befitting its importance as a major contributor of fish and wildlife.

The Taku River produces more Chinook and coho salmon than any other river in Southeast Alaska and is the last remaining large watershed without road access. On average, the Taku contributes 40% of the wild SEAK Chinook return.

Sport and commercial fishermen, hunters, guides, and outdoor enthusiasts on both sides of the US/Canada border rely heavily on the Taku River's bounty for jobs, food, and recreation. It is essential that habitat values be protected from ill-effect, in order to provide for these uses.

A number of concepts have surfaced recently, which could allow Alaska to better protect the Taku River over the long term. A stakeholder's task force would provide an appropriate venue for the full range of ideas to be analyzed and discussed with the public. This, in turn, could provide the legislature with some well-rounded options for consideration.

We encourage you to appoint a Taku River Task Force, and stand willing to help.

Best regards,

Dale Kelley
Executive Director

Mary Jackson

From: Sen. Tom Wagoner
Sent: Wednesday, March 30, 2011 2:35 PM
To: Mary Jackson
Subject: FW: SCR 9

From: Neil MacKinnon [mailto:Neil@alaskalaundry.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 30, 2011 2:00 PM
To: Sen. Joe Paskvan; Sen. Tom Wagoner; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. Lesil McGuire; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Hollis French; Sen. Gary Stevens
Cc: E. Neil MacKinnon
Subject: SCR 9

Neil MacKinnon
1114 Glacier Ave.
Juneau, Alaska 99801
907-586-1254

March 30, 2011

Senator Tom Wagoner
Senate Resources Committee

Dear Senator Wagoner,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment Monday on SCR 9. As I promised I have “cleaned up” the letter I commented from and submit it here for the committee’s consideration. Some of these comments are derived from the draft bill establishing a Critical Habitat Area for the Taku River that Senator Egan’s office had proposed, and although not directly aimed at this resolution they are at the heart of this discussion if for nothing else but background.

As I mentioned at the start of my testimony, my great grandfather used the Taku River numerous times to travel to the interior of Alaska and Canada prospecting and mining. I made my first trip up the Taku in 1954 at the age of five with my father to fish for the first time. We built one of the early cabins on the river the next year and I still build on it to this day, between hunting, fishing and prospecting the river valley.

First and foremost the Taku River has been used for trade and commerce between the coast and the interior of this continent since time immemorial. The right of our Canadian neighbors to navigate this river route for such purposes is further guaranteed by Treaty between our nations. Any acts by the State of Alaska to interfere with these rights could have serious implications for those who transit other waters of this nature. The restrictions we apply to Canadian use of the Taku must be applied to all users of the Taku. How long will it be before those who transit the waters between Blaine Washington and Ketchikan do what those who use the Taku must?

There is also a RS 2477 Right-of-Way existing on the Taku that if asserted could lead to a highway or railroad link down the river to tidewater. Interference with river navigation could force such an assertion and road from Canada to tidewater.

The area encompassed by this proposal is extensive, stretching from the Canadian Border to a half mile south of Point Bishop. It covers three different habitats; river, estuary and deep water. Which habitat is in danger? What is the problem that requires us to essentially dedicate all of this land and water to one use?

So far the proposers of SCR 9 can only point to worry's on the part of some people about a defunct proposal to barge freight with a hover barge on the Taku to the Telesequah Chief mine. This proposal was neither financially or technically feasible and is as defunct as the proposing company. Alaska needs to spend its time and resources dealing with real problems not worries about every wild proposal for this State.

The effects on the people and business who own property covered or abutting a Critical Habitat Area can potentially be severe. The CHA proposal will affect Juneau's hydro electric plants and transmission lines. It will make existing and future hydro resources and transmission lines more difficult and expensive permit, re-permit and operate. It will add to the regulatory burden of Taku Lodge and other tourism operations on the Taku. It will stifle trade and commerce on the Taku.

CHA designation will drastically change the way of life that Taku river property owners and users have enjoyed for generations. The Special Area Permit Regulations (5 AAC 95.410 (b)) are quite clear that:

“No person or governmental agency may undertake an activity listed in 5 AAC 95.420(a) within a special area unless the commissioner has been notified and a permit for the activity has been issued by the commissioner under 5 AAC 95.700 – 5 AAC 96.760”

Under CHA regulations Taku river users would be required to permit for: the continued use of their existing cabins and docks, cutting of brush and trees, digging and using an outhouse, taking river water to drink or water a garden, use or storage of gas and bug spray, and a gathering of more than twenty people. This burden for them also has corresponding burden for the State of Alaska to develop the management plan and then process, issue (or deny) and monitor these permits. These costs must be fully and fairly considered and measured against the revenue that the Taku river fish generates for the State.

Finally, the Taku River is the last Trans Border River in Alaska not encumbered by a Park, Wilderness, Wild and Scenic or other restrictive designation. For that reason alone, we must be very cautious in our actions and carefully consider all present and future affects. Absent a definite quantifiable problem and real threat a Critical Habitat Area designation for the Taku or any portion there of seems an unjustifiable misallocation of Alaska's resources that cannot provide commensurate benefit to its citizens.

I hope that I have been able to impart to you and the committee some of my concerns regarding SCR 9. I have many more concerns but I think it better to address them in a second letter that addresses specific items in SCR 9.

Sincerely

Neil MacKinnon

Mary Jackson

From: Sen. Tom Wagoner
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2011 8:42 AM
To: Mary Jackson
Subject: FW: SCR008 Taku River Task Force

Importance: High

From: jan [<mailto:ian.flory@acsalaska.net>]
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2011 2:40 AM
To: Sen. Tom Wagoner
Subject: SCR008 Taku River Task Force
Importance: High

Dear Senator,

Because I have lived on Canyon Island in the Taku River since 1984, I too have a vested and personal interest in the ongoing attempts to micromanage this area. It has not been my experience that more is better; more is usually too much. There are several points included in SCR008 and supporting documentation, which I have marked in red, to which I have objections and comments, written in black:

The Taku River Task Force will be a public forum for community input on how best to protect recreational uses and fish and wildlife habitat within the river. Its report and recommendations will be due to the legislature by December 1, 2011.

There are already public forums for community input:

The J-D F&G AC (Advisory Committee) is a local Fish and Game committee that provides a forum for the collection and expression of opinions on matters relating to the management of fish and wildlife resources. The J-D F&G AC is comprised of 15 dedicated seats that represent local use interests including trapping, freshwater charter fishing, fish processing, commercial fishing, sport fishing/personal use/hunting, non-consumptive personal use, saltwater charter fishing, non-consumptive commercial and hunting guides.

These guys are recommending further legislative action, but none is required, as they themselves (The Fish & Game Advisory Committee), as well as ADF&G and ADNR are already empowered to do the necessary job. Together they have the necessary manpower and training and by law are already required to do this job. If they are not doing an adequate job, then we need to kick them into action, not pass more laws to do what is already written.

In recent years, many citizens of the area have become very concerned about protecting the Taku River due to growing industrial-scale use of the river as a barging route. This provided the catalyst for citizens to start talking about how best to manage and protect the unique area and ensure it is available for future generations to play, work, gather food and make a living.

Conventional barging on the Taku R. is not up for management; that is part and parcel of the rules governing international waterways. Any new form of barging (like, hoverbarge, or amphib. tractor) which would impact spawning grounds and fish/wildlife habitat is subject to

ADF&G/ADNR approval, and will be brought to some current authority's attention by some or all the interested user groups, who definitely are paying close attention.

Whereas data from the Department of Fish and Game indicates that 40 to 50 percent of juvenile salmon in the Taku River watershed are reared below the confluence of the Tulsequah River, with the majority of juvenile king salmon rearing occurring in the main channel of the lower Taku River;

In the twenty seven years that I have lived here, NO studies of any fish have been conducted in the winter. The only juvenile salmon studies done in other seasons have been occasional; a few random sampling sessions done in recent years, probably in response to all the hubbub over Redfern's mine. Smolt studies of king salmon and coho have been conducted for many years now, but smolt are in the process of leaving the river, so are trapped in main stem Taku waters. Please stop this redundant process of forming yet another group to protect the Taku River habitat; the several already in place are adequate for the job; do not waste any more time or resources by forming the Taku River Task Force. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jan Flory

Lot 6, Blk 5 Canyon I. Sbdv., Taku R.

P.O. Box 210431

Auke Bay, AK 99821

***THE TAKU RIVER ECONOMY: AN
ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE
TAKU RIVER AREA***

FINAL REPORT

***PREPARED FOR:
United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters***

PREPARED BY:



Juneau • Anchorage

September 2004

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The major commercial, recreational, and cultural activities in the Taku River area benefit residents of both Southeast Alaska and British Columbia. The key economic impacts of Taku River activities are summarized below:

- The ex-vessel value of the commercial harvest of Taku River salmon has been between \$603,000 and \$2.9 million since 1994. The ten-year average is approximately \$1.3 million. Sockeye accounted for about 86 percent of the total US commercial harvest value in 2003.
- The first wholesale value of the US commercial harvest of Taku River salmon has ranged from \$2 million to \$7.4 million since 1994. The ten-year average value is approximately \$3.4 million. About 80 percent of the first wholesale value of Taku River salmon was from the sockeye harvest in 2003.
- The total economic impact of the US commercial harvest and processing of Taku River salmon includes 80 jobs, \$1.4 million in labor income, and \$5.4 million in total regional economic output.
- Approximately 400 people earn income from the commercial harvest of Taku salmon, including permit holders and their crew, processing employees and others.
- Taku River chinook account for a significant portion of the total sport catch from Juneau waters. For example, the percentage of chinook salmon from the Taku River has ranged from 56 to 93 percent of the total spring sport catch volume from the Juneau area since 1994.
- Based on an estimated \$1.5 million in sport fish related expenditures, the total economic impact of sport fishing for Taku River salmon in the Juneau area, including direct, indirect and induced effects is approximately 40 jobs, \$700,000 in labor income, and \$2 million in total economic output.
- There were 123 personal use permits fished in 2003, and a ten-year average of 130 permits. An annual average of 18 chinook and 1,200 sockeye are caught in the US personal use fishery in the Taku River. Applying a substitution value of \$5.00/pound based on the cost of substitute foods at retail stores, the ten-year average harvest of 1,380 salmon is worth approximately \$44,000 annually.
- The economic activity from the first wholesale value of the Canadian commercial harvest in the Taku River has been between \$478,000 and \$1 million since 1994. The ten-year average first wholesale value is approximately \$734,000.
- Approximately 60,750 visitors participated in some type of flightseeing tour in the Taku River area in 2003. This includes visitors to the Taku Glacier

Lodge, glacier landings, trekking, dogsledding, and other sightseeing activities. Including charter flights, the approximate retail value of all commercial tourism related aircraft activity in the Taku River area was \$13 million in 2003.

- The total direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts of commercial air activity was 150 jobs, \$5.5 million in labor income, and \$18 million in total economic output in 2003.
- Sportsmen visit the Taku River area on both sides of the border on guided and unguided hunts for moose, mountain sheep, mountain goats, grizzly bears, black bears and other game animals. Some game is hunted by members of the Taku River Tlingit First Nation and other Atlin residents, and contributes to the subsistence economy of Atlin. Including the replacement value of these traditional foods, expenditures on non-guided hunts, and the typical cost of guided hunting packages, hunting activities in the Taku River area on both sides of the border are worth approximately \$155,300 annually.
- Approximately 80 people participated in guided river trips on the Taku River in 2003, spending an estimated \$240,000 on trip packages.
- Annual property tax from private parcels in the Taku River area received by the City and Borough of Juneau is approximately \$300,000.

Inventory of Current Economic Activities in the Taku River Area

Fishing Activities	
US Activity	
Total economic impact of US commercial harvest of Taku River salmon	\$5.4 million
Annual average employment from US commercial harvest	80
Total participation in US commercial harvest	400
Total economic impact of sport fishing for Taku River salmon	\$2 million
Annual average employment from sport fishing for Taku River salmon	40
Substitution value of US Taku River personal use fishery	\$44,000
Average number of participants in personal use fishery	130
BC Activity	
First wholesale value of BC commercial harvest of Taku River salmon	\$734,000
Substitution value of BC aboriginal harvest of Taku River salmon	\$29,000
Recreational Activities	
Commercial air activity in Taku River area (total value)	\$18 million
Annual average employment from commercial air activity	150
Guided river excursions (total value)	\$240,000
Average number of participants	80
Hunting activities (total value)	\$155,300
Annual CBJ property tax from private parcels in the Taku River area	\$300,000
Mining Activities	
Value of mining exploration programs	Variable