

# 2015 INTERAGENCY FISH PASSAGE MEETING

*Ecology  
Assessment  
Design  
Policy*

*October 13, 14, 15 Juneau*



K. Mueller, USFWS

# WHY ARE WE HERE?

- *Provide an interagency forum focused on fish passage at road/stream crossings in Alaska.*
- *Buffer the impacts of attrition through knowledge transfer, communication, and coordination.*
- *Affirm the interdisciplinary inputs of biology, hydrology, and engineering to improve the practice.*

# WHAT DO WE ACCOMPLISH?

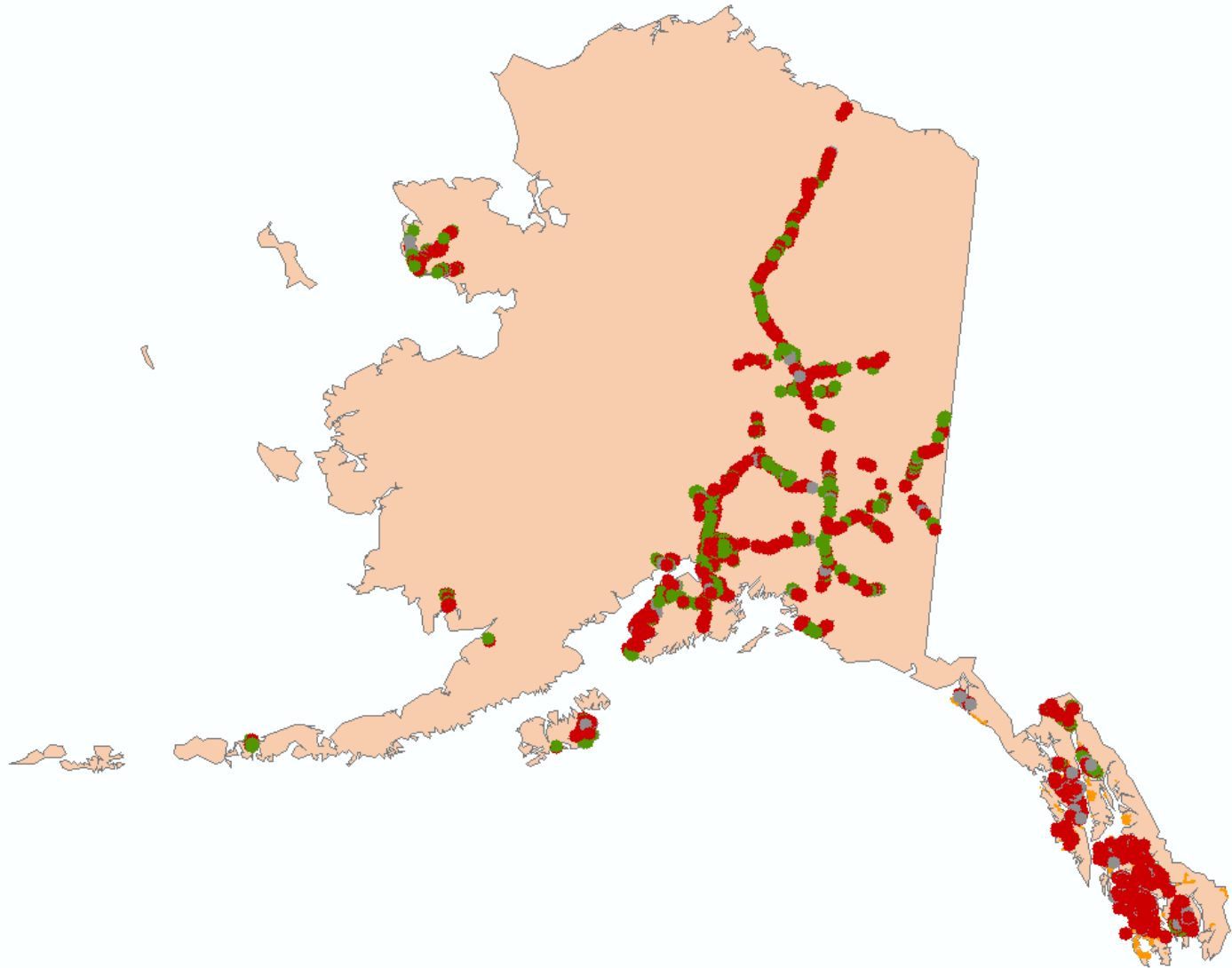
- *The ecology and movements of Alaska's fish are increasingly being understood and quantified.*
- *Statewide assessment of fish bearing waters at road/stream crossings is almost complete.*
- *Prioritization is key to good decision making and wise investment.*

# WHAT DO WE ACCOMPLISH?

- *Design and construction practice have evolved over the past decade.*
- *Demonstrate where floods and road failures are driving new local policy in Alaska.*
- *Discuss the regulatory context and how policy guides much of our work.*

# WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT SNAPSHOT -2015





# Look to the future ?

## CITING TREATY RIGHTS, JUDGE ORDERS WASHINGTON TO FIX CULVERTS BLOCKING SALMON ACCESS TO HABITAT

Posted on Friday, April 05, 2013 (PST)

A federal court judge in a March 29 injunction order put Washington and state agencies on a schedule to identify and fix any culverts in the “case area” that block access to 200 meters or more of salmon habitat.

The lawsuit's case area is focused in the Puget Sound and Washington coast, where resident tribes' signed treaties in the 1850s that ceded vast tracks of land to the federal government in exchange for assurances that they would have the right to take fish, forever.

Officially, “The case area is that portion of the State of Washington west of the Cascade Mountains and north of the Columbia River drainage area, and includes the American portion of the Puget Sound watershed, the watersheds of the Olympic Peninsula north of the Grays Harbor watershed, and the off-shore waters adjacent to those areas.”

The “culvert case” is a sub-proceeding of the long-standing U.S. v Washington treaty fishing litigation.

## Washington fights tribal treaty rights decision before 9th Circuit

MONDAY, JULY 6, 2015

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These salmon died because they were blocked by a barrier culvert. Photo from [Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife](#)

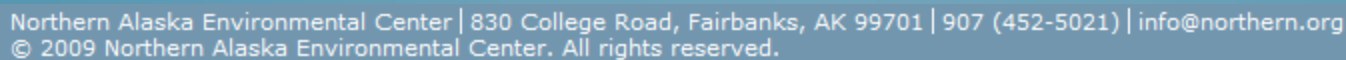
**A landmark tribal treaty rights case in Washington is pending before the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.**

In April 2013, Judge Ricardo Martinez ordered the state to fix hundreds of culverts that prevent salmon from returning to usual and accustomed tribal fishing places. He determined the [1855 Treaty of Point Elliott](#) obligates the state to protect salmon habitat.

The state has completed 26 culvert projects since that ruling and plans to finish 13 more this year. But with [more than 800 culverts](#) remaining, it will take decades and an estimated \$2.4 billion to fix them all.



## Roads to Resources





# LOCAL EFFORTS = LOCAL OUTCOMES

- Floods, failures, and research provide opportunity for education.
- Each design and installation is a 30-40 year decision influencing habitat connectivity.
- Design criteria and policy standardize the approach to local conditions and decision making.
- We have window of opportunity to prevent future habitat fragmentation by barriers.





# THANK YOU

## *Sponsors:*

- *Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership*
- *National Fish and Wildlife Foundation*
- *Agency support of time and travel*



<http://www.seakfhp.org/>

## *Planning Team:*

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- *Bob Gubernick- USFS Aquatic Organism Passage Team*
- *Mike Daigneault- ADFG Habitat Division*
- *Gillian O'Doherty, ADFG Sportfish Division*
- *Taylor Horn and Melissa Goldstein, ADOT*
- *Neil Stichert, John Hudson, and Bill Rice- USFWS*