

Silt and Salmon

By Kirik Kuzmin

This year the 7th grade class at CHS and Copper River Watershed project monitored Odiak Pond. We set up fish traps in April with local scientists to catch and show that there are fish in the pond. We found mostly sticklebacks but more importantly we found coho salmon, which are also known as silver salmon.

What does this have to do with silt? Well, during the winter the snow plows pile up the snow by the hospital and all of that sediment and other oil and debris that was on the roadway goes into Odiak pond as the snow melts. The sediment or silt is bad for young fish and eggs because it smothers eggs that are buried in the gravel and reduces how much light gets into the water. This affects how the plants grow, which in turn affect the bugs, fish, and birds up the food chain.

We don't know how many fish are in the pond right now, but we do know that the silt may lower the fish population if it continues entering the pond.

What can be done to save the salmon from the silt?

One option is to plow the snow/silt somewhere else like to a non-watered area. Or another option could be to put the snow in a giant container or box that can let the water seep through but hold the silt from escaping. Another idea is to use silt fence or a material around or under the snow pile to filter the water before it drains into the pond!

I hope you have learned that the silt is bad for fish. Let's work together to stop the silt and help the fish.



