



## COPPER RIVER WATERSHED PROJECT

≈Upriver and down, salmon are common ground≈

### **Eyak Lake Weir Boaters Meeting**

11/9/22

**Attendees:** CRWP, DOWL, 8 participants

#### **Key Takeaways:**

- Recognize that boat access won't be increased, and it won't be possible at all conditions-currently this way and this won't change-we will make it safer
- On board with a wider boat notch/engineered river bottom to improve fish and boat passage in one larger channel (vs. boat notch in one area and fish pass a separate area)
- Comments/questions, information, photos can be submitted to CRWP and engineers with the [new Google Form](#).

#### **Current boat use:**

- Approach influenced by gravel bar on river right, and Elodea on lake side
- Dangers:
  - Over 60 boat accidents
  - Knife edge,
  - The platform is getting smaller, and exposing pipes that supported it that turn into spears.
  - Visibility can be difficult when coming under the bridge to approach the weir — can't see boaters the other way.
  - Boaters parked upstream fishing, and people standing in chest waders in super deep water — wake will top their waders.

#### **Types of boats:**

- Airboats don't need much
- 8-12 inches of water depth for jets
- Crossing with props is the least-possible currently, and if the gradient of the River bottom is increased, it would not support crossing with a prop
  - Sea Ark
    - 72" beam
    - 80 jet
    - 18" draft
  - Another approx.
    - 66-68" beam
  - Air boats can go up and around the bank on river left
  - 40hp john boats
    - Apparently, you can't take a Jon boat down the Eyak on low flows
  - V-bow
    - Stern heavy and narrower than James's boat



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### General observations for River and Lake:

- Ice: gets stuck on platform, and then gets twisted/yarded by current
  - consider ice-breakers or strategies for deflecting/breaking up ice before it hits weir
  - Westerly wind towards the weir will end up driving the ice over, otherwise the ice gets blown towards the town side
- Elodea: effects approach to the weir boat crossing currently, also affecting sedimentation and silt in the lake
- River is getting shallower.
  - more silty sediment higher up
- Anecdotally tidal influence occurs quite high up the river—Mountain Slough?
- Ibek used to flow into Eyak River, but channels have migrated and this might be influencing the depth
- Erosion of the banks, mostly past Mountain Slough. More sand from Mountain Slough towards the mouth of the river. Sediment doesn't blow out like it used to.
- At certain levels of the lake, there would be multiple drain points, so not only the weir.
- King salmon spotted this year in Power Creek
- Plugged culvert near 6-mile neighborhoods (adjacent to Olson Drive) that have created upland wetlands. Road going back through The Eyak Corporations allotments (currently overgrown, but getting opened up again)
  - Eyak wants to ditch and convey water along the US side of the CRH to the pipe (may want lowered) to drain the wetlands
- CEC/Clay has some Eyak Lake/Power Creek gage data and control points to contribute/share with Euan
  - According to Clay, the peak water surface elevation between top of Asphalt and WSE was 10ft during 2006 flood
  - CEC has plans of where the wires are for a DNR permit from cable laying in 2006
  - Cabling buried in access road
- Rain on snow event experienced on Jan 2017
  - Appears in the bridge water surface elevation data

### Comments received ahead of meeting:

- Average boat nowadays is 5 - 8 ft wide, so the slot needs to be at least 10 - 12 ft to give some leeway (they've seen many boats hit the sides/get impaled on the weir)
- Nice if bumper guides could be installed on both sides to minimize damages to boats. When the current is strong, it can push a boat around a lot.
- If possible, it should be designed to handle prop boats. Most definitely larger jet-drive boats and not just airboats.
- I used to run across the weir so I might be able to give you a perspective on that.

### Moving forward:

- Recognize that boat access won't be increased, and it won't be possible at all conditions-currently this way and this won't change-we will make it safer



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- Suggestion to include a reference point (that won't get knocked out by ice) so boaters know the depth and can make their decision to cross or not
  - River left location
- On board with a wider boat notch/engineered river bottom to improve fish and boat passage in one larger channel (vs. boat notch in one area and fish pass a separate area)
- Photos/videos can be emailed to Ashley or brought by the CRWP office and will be shared with Euan.
- Any changes to fishing regulation is something discussed through ADFG/Board of Fish process, and liability discussions will need to be finalized by "owner" of final structure. Not yet defined.