

A COMMUNITY PLAN TO BRING BACK THE EKLUTNA

Idluytnu

*Returning Wild Salmon and
Restoring the Home River of the
Native Village of Eklutna*

ENDORSED BY

**NATIVE VILLAGE OF EKLUTNA
THE CONSERVATION FUND
TROUT UNLIMITED
THE ALASKA CENTER**

THE EKLUNTA RIVER IS TREASURED

The Eklutna River watershed is a beloved place known for its incredible beauty and wide variety of recreation opportunities. It is also home to one of the oldest villages in Southcentral Alaska, the Dena'ina Village of Eklutna, which was founded on the banks of the Eklutna River because of its historic runs of Chinook, coho, and sockeye salmon. Since time immemorial, the Peoples of Eklutna were fed by the Eklutna River. Salmon returning by the thousands swam past the village, climbed the canyon, spawned and finished their lives in the lake and its tributaries, returning each year to the people and their home waters.

THE PROBLEM CURRENT PLANS DON'T BRING BACK SALMON, RESTORE THE RIVER, OR REPAIR THE HARM DONE TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

View downstream of the Eklutna Dam



73 years
ago a
substantial
river
flowed out
of Eklutna
Lake

For 73 years, the Eklutna River has not been allowed to flow out of the lake, cutting off historic salmon runs and impacting local people. The project operators are legally required to address their impacts. Their proposed plan falls short of what is necessary to fix the river.

The Eklutna Hydroelectric Project, built in 1955, has dried up and cut off the entire Eklutna River from the lake and upper tributaries for 69 years. The Lower Eklutna dam, built in 1929, blocked water and salmon until it was removed in 2018. Despite the legal obligation to reconnect and restore the river, the project owners, Chugach Electric Association, Matanuska Electric Association and the Municipality of Anchorage, have so far refused. Their recently released plan would cost rate payers \$57 million, only release a small amount of water, and continue to leave a mile of river directly below the dam dry. Their plan would maintain a dead-end river and prevent salmon from reaching their spawning grounds in Eklutna Lake and its upper tributaries.

THE SOLUTION A COMMUNITY SUPPORTED ALTERNATIVE

REMOVE THE DAM AND RESTORE THE EKLUTNA RIVER

Instead of wasting ratepayer and taxpayer money on a mitigation plan that won't solve the problems, the Native Village of Eklutna and partner organizations propose simply removing the Eklutna Lake dam, fully reconnecting the river, and returning the water flows needed to support the river and its fisheries. We understand the reliance on this hydroelectric energy source in the near-term and propose removing the Eklutna Lake dam within the next decade, when replacement renewable energy is expected to be available. Two nonprofit partners have agreed to pay for the cost of dam removal.

THE BENEFITS

- Address a century of cultural and environmental neglect.
- Restore the Eklutna River to flow naturally out of Eklutna Lake.
- Re-connect the river to the lake, allowing for the recovery of sockeye, Chinook, and coho salmon, opening up 65% of their available habitat in Eklutna Lake and its upstream tributaries.
- Save utility ratepayers and MOA taxpayers from rate and property tax hikes to pay for a \$57 million plan with few benefits.
- Provide time to transition to new renewable energy projects.
- Ensure the Anchorage drinking water system is not jeopardized.
- Protect popular lakeside trails from erosion caused by fluctuating lake levels.



The Native Village of Eklutna's vision for the recovery of their river is clear: the river once again running free and full of abundant salmon.

The public has overwhelmingly supported recovery of the Eklutna River as an important community asset to Southcentral Alaska.

We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to bring more salmon back to the Eklutna watershed and upper Cook Inlet.

**TELL THE UTILITIES THAT THEIR PLAN DOES NOT SUPPORT
WILD SALMON, LOCAL PEOPLE, OR HEALTHY RIVERS**



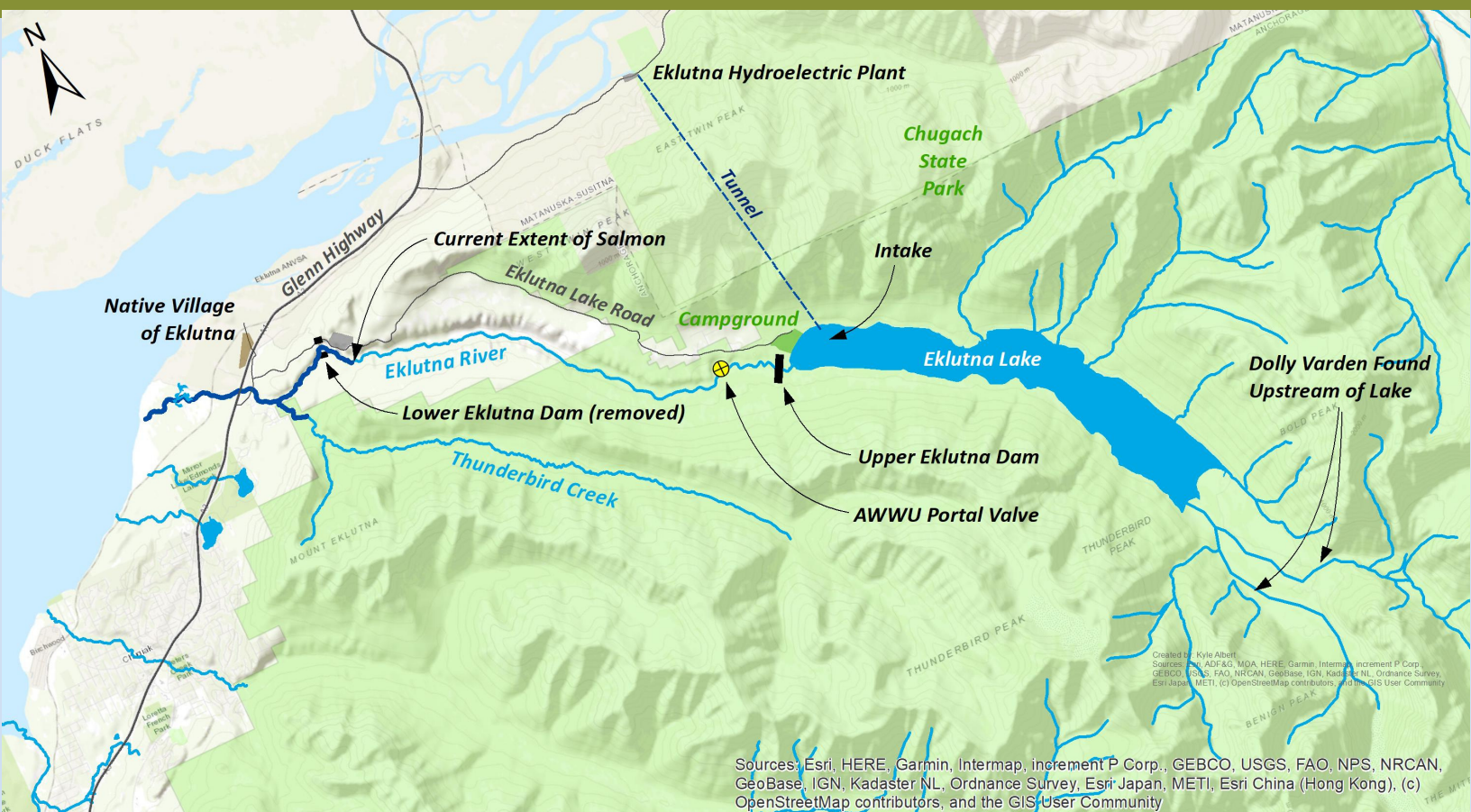
EklutnaRiver.org



“Eklutna people have endured a dry river for the past 90 years. The AWWU Portal Option does not connect Eklutna Lake to the Eklutna River and does not address the impacts to sockeye salmon that gave rise this mitigation process. Rather than a short-term fix that won’t work we want the river restored to its natural condition.”

- Aaron Leggett, President, Native Village of Eklutna

THE EKLUTNA RIVER WATERSHED



The utility proposed plan will leave a portion of the Eklutna River dry and will not return salmon to the vast majority of the Eklutna Watershed, including Eklutna Lake and its tributaries. The AWWU portal one mile downstream of the lake is the proposed start of the river. The Native Village of Eklutna estimates there are over 20 miles of habitat upstream of Eklutna Lake.