

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
WATERSHED & NATURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION
RESOLUTION NO. 2019-03
A RESOLUTION REGARDING RESTORATION OF THE EKLUTNA RIVER.

(WNRC Case No. 2017-03)

WHEREAS, the Native Village of Eklutna is the largest Dena'ina settlement in the Municipality of Anchorage; and

WHEREAS, the Eklutna River historically was a major subsistence resource for the Native Village of Eklutna; and

WHEREAS, the Eklutna River has been in a badly degraded condition since 1929 due to hydropower dams and water diversions; and

WHEREAS, the Eklutna River still supports five species of salmon, including Cook Inlet chinook and sockeye salmon, though in greatly diminished numbers from historical levels; and

WHEREAS, Eklutna Incorporated, the village corporation for Eklutna, is the largest landowner in the Municipality of Anchorage and owns most of the land along the Eklutna River and around Eklutna Lake; and

WHEREAS, Eklutna Inc. and the Native Village of Eklutna have made substantial contributions to the development of the Municipality of Anchorage through school sites, highways, railroads, powerlines and rights-of-way; and

WHEREAS, The Conservation Fund, Eklutna Inc., and the Native Village of Eklutna collaborated on a \$7.5 million project to dismantle the Lower Eklutna River dam; however, little to no water flows out of Eklutna Lake into the Eklutna River because of water diversions for the Eklutna Power Project; and

WHEREAS, Municipal Light and Power (ML&P) owns a 52% share of the Eklutna Power Project and, together with Chugach Electric and Matanuska Electric Association (MEA), is legally obligated to mitigate for the impacts of the Eklutna Power Project to fish and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, now that the lower dam is removed, additional benefits of mitigation to restore the Eklutna River can be addressed; and

WHEREAS, ML&P, Chugach Electric and MEA have begun the required mitigation process, including studies of hydrology and fisheries of the Eklutna River; and

WHEREAS, sediments accumulated behind the Lower Eklutna River Dam and elsewhere in the river remain in the river channel due to low water flow conditions; and

WHEREAS, moving forward with mitigation to restore the Eklutna River will have clear benefits to the Native Village of Eklutna and other Municipality residents; and

WHEREAS, the most beneficial form of mitigation for impacts caused by the Eklutna Power Project is likely to be the restoration of adequate in-stream flows and fish passage; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Ethan Berkowitz and members of the Anchorage Assembly supported restoration of the Eklutna River with the passage of AR 2017-324, "A Resolution in Support of Efforts to Restore the Eklutna River"; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska State Constitution provides for priority use of the State's waters for municipal water supply over all other beneficial uses; and

WHEREAS, Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility is authorized by the State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, to withdraw as much as 41 million gallons per day of water from the lake; and

WHEREAS, Eklutna Lake provides as much as 90% of the water supply distributed by Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility to its customers throughout the Municipality of Anchorage; and

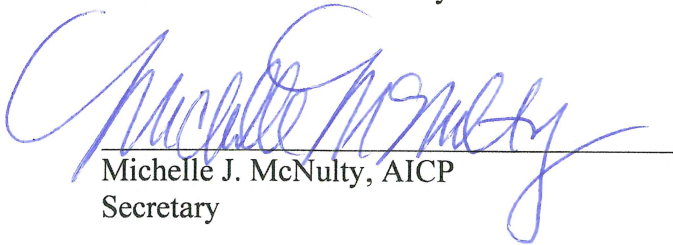
WHEREAS, Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility's withdrawals from the lake provide a source of renewable hydroelectric power for water utility operations and augmentation of the regional power grid.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Watershed and Natural Resources Advisory Commission recommends that:

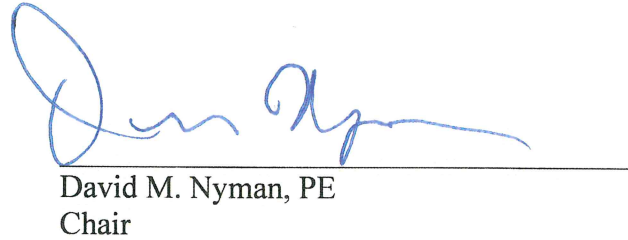
- A. The Anchorage Assembly recognizes and supports re-establishing adequate in-stream flows and fish passage to restore the Eklutna River to a healthy system that supports abundant wild salmon populations for the benefit of the Native Village of Eklutna and residents of the Municipality of Anchorage.
- B. Municipal Light and Power, Chugach Electric and Matanuska Electric Association work collaboratively with the Native Village of Eklutna, Eklutna Inc. and state and federal resource agencies to implement an experimental program of flushing flows to the Eklutna River to better facilitate studies and mitigation planning and to allow for recovery of salmon habitat.
- C. Municipal Light and Power, Chugach Electric and Matanuska Electric Association make a definitive commitment to restoring water flow to the Eklutna River.

- D. The Anchorage Assembly provide assurance that all parties to studies or actions to mitigate the effects of dam construction and/or dismantlement will recognize and protect the use of the Eklutna Lake watershed in perpetuity as a source of municipal water supply.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Watershed & Natural Resources Advisory Commission on this 9th day of October 2019.



Michelle J. McNulty, AICP
Secretary



David M. Nyman, PE
Chair

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