STATEMENT OF SUPPORT
FOR THE STAND FOR SALMON BALLOT INITIATIVE
FROM RETIRED STATE & FEDERAL SCIENTISTS & MANAGERS

We the undersigned are retired state and federal agency scientists and managers with considerable experience in salmon biology, habitat and management in Alaska;

Alaska boasts world-class salmon resources, and these resources support vital subsistence, commercial, sport and personal use fisheries;

These fisheries feed countless Alaskans, create important jobs and revenues for our local villages and communities, support Alaska’s tourism industry, and feed people around the world;

Salmon occupy a critical role in the food chain and ecosystem where they support other species important for subsistence, personal use, tourism and guide industries;

The repeal of the Alaska Coastal Management Program in 2011, along with related efforts to accelerate state and federal permitting efforts, have dangerously eroded salmon habitat protection in recent years;

Salmon runs from Europe to New England and the Pacific Northwest have collapsed, and habitat impacts have played a significant role in these declines; Alaska has an opportunity to learn from these habitat management mistakes, but today, we are simply repeating many of them;

We recognize the inherent complexity of our salmon ecosystems, and while ocean conditions will continue to affect our salmon, increased development and use in our coastal watersheds – including large projects in sensitive areas - are a direct threat to healthy salmon runs now and in the future;

The Alaska Anadromous Fish Act – also known as Title 16 – is the only law that specifically protects salmon habitat in Alaska. No other state or federal law does what Title 16 does;

Title 16 was adopted at statehood, and while it requires the “proper protection” of wild salmon, there is no definition in law for “proper protection;”

Under the Alaska Constitution Article VIII, every Alaskan owns our public fish and water resources. Yet under current law, Alaskans have no right to public notice and comment on fish habitat permits;

Alaska must modernize its outdated fish habitat protection law if we hope to maintain healthy salmon runs now and in the future;

The Stand for Salmon Ballot Initiative 1 creates a reasonable balance between development and salmon habitat protection by adopting a series of well-considered standards for projects that may impact salmon habitat.

That’s why we, the undersigned retired state and federal scientists and managers, strongly support the Stand for Salmon Ballot Initiative 1.

(over)
Mike Rearden, Refuge Manager
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (34 years, retired)

Rich Gustafson, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (38 years, retired)

Ted Heuer, Refuge Manager U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (30 years, retired)

Dave Athons, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (20 years, retired)

Ann Rappaport, Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (19 years, retired)

Loren Flagg, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (19 years, retired)

John Schoen, Conservation Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (20 years, retired)

Arthur Sowls, Wildlife Biologist
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (38 years, retired)

Tony DeGange, Chief, Ecological & Geol. Research
U.S. Geological Survey (39 years, retired)

Bill Butler, Wildlife Biologist/Pilot
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (30 years, retired)

Kimball Sundberg, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (22 years, retired)

Bill Hauser, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (retired, 38 yrs. exp.)

Jeff Adams, Fish & Wildlife Biologist
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (28 years, retired)

Marilyn Sigman, Habitat Biologist
Alaska Dept. Fish & Game/USFWS (15 years, retired)

Nicky Szarzi, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (22 years, retired)

Mimi Hoag, Wildlife Biologist
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (25 years, retired)

Bill Larned, Habitat Manager
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (36 years, retired)

Jeanne Hanson, Fisheries Biologist
NOAA (26 years, retired)

Phil Mundy, Fisheries Biologist
ADFG & NMFS (23 years, retired)

Dave Mesiar, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (34 years, retired)

Danielle Jerry, Chief, Realty & Natural Resources
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (29 years, retired)

Drew Crawford, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (35 years, retired)

John DeLapp, Fish & Wildlife Biologist
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (20 years, retired)

Charlie Trowbridge, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (29 years, retired)

Earl Krygier, U.S. Commissionner
N. Pac. Anadromous Fish Comm'n (38 Yrs. Fish.Mgmt, ret.)

David Irons, Wildlife Biologist
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (36 years, retired)

Steve Albert, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (27 years, retired)

Jeff Fox, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (28 years, retired)

Roger MacCampbell, Chief Park Ranger
Alaska Dept. Natural Resources (31 years, retired)

Dr. Kenneth Goldman Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (13 years, retired)

Dick Marshall, Fisheries Biologist
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (30 years, retired)

James Brady, Comm. Fish Supervisor
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (23 years, retired)

Rick Sinnott, Wildlife Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (28 years, retired)

Ken Tarbox, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (20 years, retired)

Dr. Jim Ferguson, Habitat Biologist
Alaska Depart. of Fish & Game/ADEC (18 years, retired)

Nancy Hillstrand, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (21 years, retired)

Craig Ely, Research Biologist
U.S. Geological Survey (29 years, retired)

Larry Bright, Branch Chief
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (25 years, retired)

Phil Brna, Habitat Supervisor
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (20 years, retired)

Leslie Morton, Natural Resources Manager
U.S. Dept. of the Navy, (14 years, retired)

Bill Bechtol, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (25 years, retired)

Mark Kuwanda, Habitat Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (30 years, retired)

Katherine Rowell, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (25 years, retired)

Roger Harding, Fish Habitat Coordinator
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (32 years, retired)

Tim Jennings, Asst. Regional Director
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (29 years, retired)

Bill Eldridge, Wildlife Biologist
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (37 years, retired)

Keith Pahlke, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (32 years, retired)

Debra Clausen, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (21 years, retired)

Willy Dunne, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (19 years, retired)

Dan Boone, Wildlife Biologist
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (28 years, retired)

Patt Berkhahn, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (20 years, retired)

Paul Novak, Fisheries Biologist
Alaska Dept of Fish & Game (19 years, retired)

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