



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF  
FISH AND GAME**

***DIVISION OF SPORT FISH***

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO: Robert Massengill  
Tim McKinley  
Kristine Dunker  
Jack Erickson  
Tom Vania  
James Hasbrouck**

**DATE: April 15, 2014**

**FROM: Robert Begich, Jason Pawluk**

**TELEPHONE: 262-2920, 260-2919**

**SUBJECT: Communication Plan for the  
Soldotna Creek Drainage Restoration  
Project**

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**Soldotna Creek Drainage Restoration Project  
Communication Plan**

**Issue: Disseminate information about the Soldotna Creek Drainage Restoration Plan – including public notices for an ADEC Pesticide Use Permit Application and Environmental Assessment which will be released for public comment April 21, 2014.**

**Goal: Inform ADF&G employees of the Sport Fish Division's upcoming project to remove invasive northern pike from the Soldotna Creek Drainage using rotenone.**

**Coordinator: Robert Begich,**

**Spokespersons: Robert Begich (first point of contact), Jason Pawluk**

**Background:**

- Illegally introduced northern pike were discovered in the Soldotna Creek Drainage in the 1970's.
- The Soldotna Creek Drainage encompasses 42 sq. mi. and drains into the Kenai River near river mile 22.
- Native fish populations in the Soldotna Creek drainage, such as rainbow trout, are now absent in the western portion of the drainage (East and West Mackey Lakes, Derks Lake) due to pike predation.

- These pike threaten to expand into Kenai River drainages where they could imperil additional salmon resources.
- An established northern pike population has not been detected in the Kenai River drainage outside the Soldotna Creek drainage.
- ADFG has been planning a multi-year northern pike eradication project in the Soldotna Creek drainage that will begin in the fall of 2014.
- The western branch of the Soldotna Creek drainage (Union Lake, West Mackey Lake, East Mackey Lake and Derks Lake) will be treated with rotenone to remove northern pike in fall 2014.
- The remainder of the Soldotna Creek drainage (mainstem creek and headwater lakes) will likely be treated with rotenone during the summer of 2016 and 2017.
- An environmental assessment and ADEC Pesticide Use Permit for the Soldotna Creek Drainage rotenone treatment will have public notices announced April 21, 2014.
- Rotenone is a plant-based fish pesticide that is not harmful to mammals or plants at the low concentration used for fish management
- Temporary fish barriers in the outlets of each lake will prevent northern pike from reentering an area after treatment.
- The rotenone will not affect fish in the Kenai River because rotenone will be diluted to concentrations non-toxic to fish. Also, ADFG will be capable of chemically deactivating the rotenone using potassium permanganate.
- As a precaution, warning signs will be posted, and public contact with rotenone treated water will be discouraged until full deactivation is confirmed.
- Efforts will be made to preserve the native fish populations (i.e. salmon, trout etc.) in the Soldotna Creek Drainage.

**Message:** Northern pike have caused the extinction of native fish species in several lakes within the Soldotna Creek drainage. Northern pike have been documented entering the Kenai River from Soldotna Creek which could serve to populate Kenai River drainage areas with northern pike and cause further fishery losses. Currently, a self-sustaining population of northern pike is not known to exist in the Kenai River drainage outside of Soldotna Creek. Based upon the illegal introduction and expansion of non-native northern pike into other waters within Southcentral Alaska, the best scientific information available tells us that, without action, northern pike will cause severe losses to fisheries within the drainage where suitable northern pike habitat exists, i.e. the Moose River. The Soldotna Creek restoration project will be ADF&G's fourth project utilizing rotenone since 2008 on the Kenai Peninsula to eradicate northern pike and restore fisheries. After careful evaluation of various control and eradication options, ADF&G has determined treating the Soldotna Creek Drainage with rotenone systematically over a four-year period will provide a safe, cost-efficient and permanent solution to eradicate the pike. Removing northern pike from the Soldotna Creek Drainage will allow restoration of the native fish assemblage in some lakes. The public will be asked to temporarily avoid contact with rotenone-treated waters, and warning signs will be posted at common access locations.

**External Communication:**

We will draft a news release and contact media

**Internal Communication:** Distribute communication plan to Anchorage and other areas with invasive northern pike populations.