ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Wildlife Restoration Grant

GRANT NUMBER: AKW-27

PROJECT NUMBER: 4.0

PROJECT TITLE: Cottonwood Creek Wetlands Protection, Enhancement, and Hunter Access Assessment, Phase I

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: September 1, 2019 – August 31, 2020

PERFORMANCE YEAR: January 1, 2018 – June 30, 2020 (extended to December 31, 2020)

REPORT DUE DATE: December 29, 2020

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Joe Meehan, Lands & Refuges Program Coordinator

COOPERATORS: N/A

Authorities: 2 CFR 200.328
2 CFR 200.301
50 CFR 80.90

I. PROGRESS ON PROJECT OBJECTIVES DURING PERFORMANCE YEAR:

Objective 1: Produce a document assessing management options for wetland habitats in the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge to maximize their value to water birds and to provide for public access.

Job/Activity 1a: Engage an engineering firm(s) with expertise in wetlands, soil stability, coastal and riverine erosion, and structural, civil and geotechnical engineering to produce an assessment of options (and costs) for slowing, stopping and/or reversing the loss of existing wetlands.

Job/Activity 1b: Engage an engineering firm(s) with expertise in wetlands, soil stability, coastal and riverine erosion, and structural, civil and geotechnical engineering to produce an assessment of options (and costs) for maintaining limited motorized vehicle access in the Cottonwood Creek wetlands.

Accomplishments Objective 1a and 1b: During this reporting period, one site visit was made with the selected contractor (DOWL Engineering) to inspect the project area, review scope of the project, and discuss project goals. During late summer and fall 2019, DOWL Engineering staff made multiple site visits to conduct site assessments and to deploy monitoring equipment. This work included vegetative, topographical and hydrological surveys; collection of water and soil samples; and deployment of pressure transducers and remote cameras. The results from this work were presented in a data and analysis report (citation in Section IV below).

DOWL Engineering also drafted an alternatives analysis presenting and assessing nine options for wetland preservation and restoration, and five options for motorized trail routes with six options for motorized trail construction materials (citation in Section IV below).

Objective 2: Promote public participation in determining appropriate actions to manage wetland habitats in the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge.

Job/Activity 2a: Engage all interested partners, stakeholders and general public in determining best course of action to protect wetland habitats and provide for public use in the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge.

Accomplishments: Select stakeholder have been informed of progress with this work and some have participated in field visits.

II. SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED ON PROJECT TO DATE:

III. SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT REPORTS AND/OR AMENDMENTS: Due to project delays associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, we are requesting an extension of this project until June 30, 2021.

IV. PUBLICATIONS:

Cottonwood Creek Engineering Assessment, Data Acquisition and Analysis Report; AKW-27-4.0, RFP IHPC 19-001. Prepared for Alaska Department of Fish and Game by DOWL Engineering. June 2020. 105 pages.

Cottonwood Creek Engineering Assessment, Draft Alternatives Analysis; AKW-27-4.0, RFP IHPC 19-001. Prepared for Alaska Department of Fish and Game by DOWL Engineering. June 2020. 83 pages.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS PROJECT: none

Prepared by: Joe Meehan

Date: December 23, 2020