

Wildlife Restoration MULTI-YEAR GRANT INTERIM PERFORMANCE REPORT

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: Project 3.0

PROJECT TITLE: Forest Road Improvements for Hunter Access – Matanuska and Susitna Valleys

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: September 1, 2017 – December 31, 2020

PERFORMANCE YEAR: September 29, 2018 to September 29, 2019

REPORT DUE DATE: December 29, 2019

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Stephen Nickel, Mat-Su/SW Area Forester
DNR, Division of Forestry
101 Airport Road
Palmer, AK 99645
Phone: (907) 761-6301
Email: stephen.nickle@alaska.gov

COOPERATORS: Katie Sechrist
ADF&G, Division of Wildlife Conservation
Anchorage, AK 99518
Phone: (907) 267-2541
Email: katie.sechrist@alaska.gov

Authorities: 2 CFR 200.328
2 CFR 200.301
50 CFR 80.90

I. PROGRESS ON PROJECT OBJECTIVES DURING PERFORMANCE YEAR

OBJECTIVE 1: Repair 2.3 miles of Palmer Fishhook Road

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: ATV and OHV users in this area have virtually destroyed the road surface within the Matanuska Valley Moose Range (MVMR) by running machines on the road during wet periods, causing ruts and debilitating the drainage design of the road. During this performance period, DNR Division of Forestry (DOF) continued repairs in key areas of this section of road in summer 2019. A contract was executed with Alaska X, a local earthwork contractor, to improve drainage through ditch line repairs and installation of sump drains at key low points. Additional pit run gravel material was added to harden the road surface. This work was done with DOF's match funds for this Pittman-Robertson

funded project. Contracted improvements will help DOF analyze the best way forward in the future with this challenging section of road. The results of this work were semi experimental in nature to determine what methods would work best in this area which turned out to be a success. Work for this objective was completed during this performance period.

OBJECTIVE 2: Repair 1.9 miles of Willer-Kash Road

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: During this performance period the Division of Forestry initiated and awarded a contract to an engineering firm to design improvements for multiple sections of the Willer-Kash road system. The engineering firm produced 100% design documents and DOF and ADF&G are currently determining the best route forward to execute the work on the ground. Solicitation for bids for this objective was not completed during the spring of 2019 due to anticipated staff changes within DOF and what turned out to be a busy fire season that required all non-fire staff's attention until the end of September.

OBJECTIVE 3: Repair 1.8 miles of Zero Lake Road

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: No work was done on this segment during this performance period. ADF&G and DOF have determined work is not feasible on this road and will submit a grant amendment to FWS to update the scope of work in the near future.

OBJECTIVE 4: Educate wildlife recreationists and hunter user groups about sustainable road use practices.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: No additional work has been completed on this objective during this performance period. ADF&G and DOF have determined that developing brochures regarding responsible forest road use is not the preferred method of communication with the target audience. ADF&G will update the grant to change the scope of this objective to focus on developing signs regarding responsible forest road use that will be posted on the Willer-Kash Road system.

II. SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED ON PROJECT TO DATE.

This project was awarded in September 2017, just as the DOF Project Engineer was taking on his new role as Area Forester for the Mat-Su / Southwest in Palmer. In December 2018 he accepted a new position as the Coastal Region Forester. An acting area forester was appointed in December 2018 and remained in that role until April 2019 when he accepted the Area Forester position. These personnel transitions combined with a delay in processing the Reimbursable Services Agreement (RSA) between ADF&G and DOF, delayed implementation of engineering designs and procurement processes. The RSA was completed fall of 2019 and ADF&G and DNR have secured the RSA for the grant funds for the project. DOF contracted the design work on the Willer-Kash segment with RECON, LLC, in spring of 2019 and design work was completed to a 100% final package in March 2019. Bids for work on Willer-Kash were not solicited in 2019 due to staff changes within DOF and ultimately what turned out to be a busy fire season. Initial road repair work on the Moose Range segment started the summer of 2018 and was completed

summer of 2019. The results of this semi experimental work were successful. Several sump drains were created in wet areas and initial results indicate that the drains are adequate and effective.

III. SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT REPORTS AND/OR AMENDMENTS.

No significant development report or amendments were submitted to FWS during this performance period. However, ADF&G will be submitting a grant amendment soon to update the scope of work for this project and extend the period of performance end date.

IV. PUBLICATIONS

All publications and kiosks will be in design in winter 2019. See attached photos.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS PROJECT

The DOF engineer for this project is leaving State Service spring 2020 and will leave DOF without the expertise to continue with construction management of this project. ADF&G and DOF are devising a plan to retain the engineering services of another entity, likely DNR State Parks, to take the 100% design and create the bid package and oversee construction management. The project will continue as planned and will likely be constructed in 2021.

Prepared by:

Stephen Nickel, Mat-Su/SW Area Forester, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, Palmer

Katie Sechrist, ADF&G Division of Wildlife Conservation, Hunter Access Program, Anchorage

Date: November 26, 2019



Figure 1.—Contractor filled in and leveled out rutted areas and improved drainage at historically wet and soft locations on the DOF Wendt Road access in the Matanuska Valley Moose Range (MVMR).



Figure 2.—Drain sumps were installed as part of DOF road improvements in the MVMR. Some were protected by trees laid over the top to prevent damage from ATV traffic. Buried logs serve as water bars to slow runoff and allow water to percolate into soil.



Figure 3.—Soil and log berms along MVMR road improvements redirect traffic from social trails to the improved road. Dirt piled over logs is intended to deter users from cutting logs in these piles.