

BIRCHWOOD, ALASKA
BCCR No. 3

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BIRCHWOOD COMMUNITY COUNCIL IN SUPPORT
OF EFFORTS TO RESTORE THE EKLUTNA RIVER.**

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

WHEREAS, a principal impact from hydro power development in the Eklutna watershed is the loss of the Eklutna River's salmon runs; and

WHEREAS, the Eklutna River still supports five species of salmon, including Cook Inlet king salmon 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, the Native Village of Eklutna and Eklutna Inc. have made substantial contributions to the development of the Municipality of Anchorage providing land for school sites, highways, railroads, power lines and rights-of-way; and

WHEREAS, The Native Village of Eklutna, Eklutna Inc., and The Conservation Fund collaborated on a \$7.5 million project to dismantle the Lower Eklutna River dam; and

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

WHEREAS, little to no water flows out of Eklutna Lake into the Eklutna River because of water diversions for the Eklutna Power Project; and

WHEREAS, restored in stream flow is necessary to flush the accumulated sediments downstream and allow for the recovery of salmon habitat; and

WHEREAS, stabilized lake levels and fish passage for upstream and downstream migrating salmon to and from Eklutna Lake would restore important spawning and rearing habitat for salmon; and

1 **WHEREAS**, the Municipality of Anchorage retains a majority interest (52%) in the
2 Eklutna Power Project; and

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4 **WHEREAS**, the restoration of in stream flow to the Eklutna River and restored
5 fish passage to and from Eklutna Lake are the most desirable forms of
6 mitigation for impacts caused by the Eklutna Power Project; and

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8 **WHEREAS**, an experimental three-week period of flushing flows in September
9 2021 allowed for some sediment transport and re-establishment of the river
10 channel, allowing for more meaningful study results and better mitigation design;
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13 **WHEREAS**, the request for restored in stream flow in 2022 was denied by
14 the Eklutna Power Purchasers; and

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16 **WHEREAS**, the Watershed and Natural Resources Advisory Commission of
17 the Municipality of Anchorage supported restoration of the Eklutna River
18 with the passage of Resolution WNRC 2019-03 titled “A Resolution Regarding
19 Restoration of the Eklutna River”; and

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21 **WHEREAS**, the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) supported restoration of
22 the Eklutna River with passage of Resolution 20-17 “to restore traditional rivers
23 and

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25 THE BIRCHWOOD COMMUNITY COUNCIL RESOLVES:

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27 **Section 1.** The Birchwood Community Council recognizes that restoration of
28 the Eklutna River, including allowing salmon passage the length of the Eklutna
29 River, to and from Eklutna Lake, and into headwater tributaries, will benefit the
30 Native Village of Eklutna and residents of the Municipality of Anchorage and is
31 a priority of the Municipality in a manner consistent with the requirements of
32 the 1991 Agreement.

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34 **Section 2.** The Birchwood Community Council supports the restoration of the
35 Eklutna watershed, including providing instream flow and fish passage the
36 length of the Eklutna River and into Eklutna Lake and requests that, Chugach
37 Electric Association, and Matanuska Electric Association commit as well.

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39 **Section 3.** This resolution shall be effective upon passage and approval.

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41 PASSED AND APPROVED by the Birchwood Community Council this 14th
42 day of December, 2022.

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47 Co-Chair Debbi Ossiander

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Co-Chair Matt Cruickshank