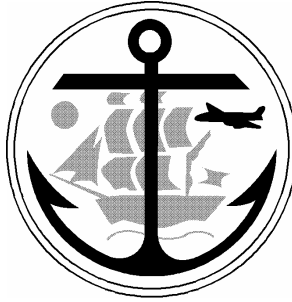


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Mark Begich, Mayor

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BRIDGE PROJECT SIGNALS REHAB OF SHIP CREEK *Salmon Recovery Money Makes Area Safer for Anglers*

The rehabilitation of one of Anchorage's potential premier attractions for residents and visitors alike - Ship Creek - is well underway with the installation of a new bridge and removal of three corroded culverts, Mayor Mark Begich announced today.

Joined by representatives of numerous local, state and federal agencies and funded largely by earmarks secured by Alaska's congressional delegation, the mayor detailed additional plans to improve Ship Creek and other city creeks, including Campbell and Chester.

"There is no other city on the globe where you can land a 45-pound king salmon within sight of high-rise office towers and then walk just three blocks to a Broadway play or four-star restaurant," the mayor said at a news conference at the bridge. "Anchorage is unique, and Ship Creek helps make us so."

The culverts were installed in the early 1970s and had become corroded and weak from years of tidal action and salt water. The Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) removed the culverts over the past several months, installed pilings, and built a new two-lane asphalt bridge.

The \$3 million restoration project was funded with a portion of \$10 million in Salmon Recovery Funds, given since 2002 to the municipality by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and earmarked for the creeks. The funding was secured through Alaska's congressional delegation, the effort led by Sen. Ted Stevens.

The MOA has been working with several agencies on projects eligible for the funds, including land acquisition, redevelopment projects, creek and fishing access, watershed restoration, and public education. The projects funded are designed to restore fish passage and habitat.

(more)

Ship Creek Bridge

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“This money appropriated by Congress, allows us to partner with other agencies that have money and expertise and move forward on a number of important creek projects,” Mayor Begich said. “This new bridge will have benefits for years to come as we work on the overall renovation of the Ship Creek area.”

“Fisheries and restoration work in Alaska are highly gratifying due to the importance of the salmon stocks. Improvements such as the construction of the Ship Creek Bridge enable better fish passage for species like Chinook and coho salmon,” said NOAA Corps. Lt. Cmdr. Mark Boland.

“The NOAA Restoration Center is proud to partner with the Municipality of Anchorage in this first in a series of restoration projects on Ship Creek,” said Chris Doley, the head of the NOAA Restoration Center. “Restoring habitat not only benefits the local ecosystem, but gives something back to the community in the form of recreational fishing opportunities, and fosters environmental stewardship as well.”

Other projects associated with the NOAA Restoration Center grants, and their partners the Anchorage Waterways Council, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Army Corps of Engineers, the Alaska Railroad, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and Greatland Trust, include:

At the mouth of Chester Creek, a project to allow more turning salmon to maneuver dual culverts and a weir at the outlet of Westchester Lagoon, and then make it into the creek.

In Campbell Creek, near popular Campbell Creek Park, plans call for reducing erosion and improving creek access. Fishing, viewing, and other creek activities will be enhanced as the area is designed for long-term use by restoring the riparian zone along the creek and channeling foot traffic to access points designed to withstand damage.

At Muldoon Road where Chester Creek is constricted into a ditch and two poorly functioning, submerged culverts; other restoration funds will be leveraged to create a new creek environment complimentary to the town center plan with a bridge for the creek to pass under Muldoon Road.

As these projects move forward, the city will also be working to obtain creek easements and identify additional projects to restore habitat and fish passage in creeks throughout Anchorage.

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