



NATIVE VILLAGE OF EKLUTNA

Proposed Eklutna Final Fish & Wildlife Program

April 9, 2024

Our principles

- We seek a fair balance of renewable energy production, drinking water protection, river conservation, public recreation, and cultural restoration.
- The Eklutna River must flow with adequate water for abundant salmon habitat, continuously and without interruption from its source to the sea.
- Fish must be able to freely swim the entire length of the Eklutna River, upstream to the lake and its headwater tributaries, and back downstream.
- Restoration of the Eklutna River and its fisheries will address 100 years of cultural harms to the Eklutna Dena'ina and enhance Southcentral Alaska.

Proposed Eklutna Final Fish & Wildlife Program - Core Components

1. Alternate "Eklutna River Release Facility"

- Construct a pump station that takes water directly from the bottom of Eklutna Lake and discharges it at the glacial moraine area upstream of the dam. The water would be released downstream through the existing dam outlet gate instead of the AWWU portal valve facility.
- This alternate system would provide continuous instream flow to all 12 miles of the Eklutna River below the dam; operate completely independent from any existing AWWU or hydropower infrastructure; support future dam removal by ensuring that AWWU can maintain its full withdrawals; and, if necessary, keep the river watered during dry winter months once the Eklutna Lake Dam is removed.

2. Existing Outlet Gate & Other Infrastructure Improvements

- Automate the existing outlet gate as proposed.
- Construct new AWWU bridges to have hydraulic capacity for a free-flowing river.

3. Reopener for Dam Removal Once 40 MW of Replacement Renewable Energy Is Secured or other acceptable alternatives.

- The Project Owners must secure 40 MW of replacement renewable energy no later than 2034 and following the process called for in Sections 2 through 6, remove the Eklutna Lake Dam unless other solutions are found that meet the resource goals described in "Our Principles." While other solutions that meet the resource goals

described in "Our Principles" may also be considered in the reopener, our preferred solution is the removal of the Eklutna Lake Dam.

4. Water Flows, Water Budget, & Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan

- We do not believe the flow regime in the Proposed Final is adequate to attract or support fish or restore natural river processes. However, if the utilities agree to the core components outlined above in our proposal, we are willing to accept the proposed year-round instream flow regime, as well as the channel maintenance flow regime, the annual water budget, and the monitoring and adaptive management plan as proposed in the Proposed Final Fish and Program of 3/19/2024 until the dam can be removed or other acceptable alternatives implemented. The alternative Eklutna River Release Facility and the automated existing outlet gate must deliver this flow regime.

5. Establish Fund Reserve

- All earnings from the Eklutna Hydro Lake Dam over and above the cost to operate it, would be placed into an interest-bearing reserve account to be used to pay for the alternatives to meet the fish and wildlife resource goals as stated above by 2034.

6. Seek Federal Funding

- The Native Village of Eklutna will assist in seeking federal fund support through either grants or a direct appropriation from the federal government in partnership with the Project Owners.

7. Committee Membership

- NVE shall be a permanent member of the Eklutna River Committee

Our Rationale

The Eklutna River, our river, has been degraded for 95 years. We will wait a bit longer to see the full restoration of the Eklutna River until sufficient new "firm" renewable energy is installed to displace Eklutna hydropower. Industry experts predict that sufficient new firm renewable energy will be installed by 2034 to displace Eklutna hydropower, and we are ready and willing to help develop these new renewable energy sources. When sufficient new firm renewables are installed, the Eklutna Lake Dam must be removed, or other acceptable alternatives implemented. Our partners have committed to the full cost of removing the Eklutna Lake Dam.

Until the Eklutna Lake Dam is removed, the Eklutna River must flow its entire length below the dam. By drawing water from the bottom of Eklutna Lake and discharging it at the glacial moraine area upstream of the dam to be released downstream through the existing dam outlet gate, the alternative "Eklutna River Release Facility" proposed above will allow the Eklutna River to flow its entire length.

The Eklutna River Release Facility will do everything the AWWU Portal does, including more. It will provide year-round continuous flow to the entire river without leaving a one-mile gap of a dry river. It will avoid impacting AWWU facilities, operations, or water withdrawals, allow

AWWU to draw its full water entitlement even after dam removal, and ensure the river will never go dry.

The Eklutna River Release Facility will be more affordable than the AWWU Portal. A similar system (the Siphon Bypass Pipeline) was projected to cost as little as \$8.4 million.

While we believe that this siphon pump option provides the best compromise by protecting Anchorage's water supply and taking a staged approach to full fish passage, the Native Village of Eklutna continues to recognize and support our other resource-oriented partners at USFWS, NOAA, and ADF&G in accomplishing our shared resource goals of full fish passage.

Removal of the Eklutna Lake Dam, in combination with the Eklutna River Release Facility, could continue to allow the production of some hydropower from the Eklutna Hydroelectric Project.

While we do not believe the flow regime proposed in the Draft Final is adequate to attract or support fish or restore natural river processes, we are willing to compromise and accept the proposed flow regimes should the utilities agree to our proposals. We are also willing to delay fish passage into Eklutna Lake until the Eklutna Lake Dam is fully removed or other alternatives are implemented to achieve our resource goals, which converge with the 1991 Agreement signatory resources agencies.