



Kenai Russian River Complex Stewardship Program

Issue

Alaska's Kenai-Russian River Complex (loosely defined as a five mile radius from the confluence of the Kenai and Russian Rivers) is multi-jurisdictional area managed for high use recreation that boasts a rich cultural heritage and the State's most popular sockeye salmon sport fisheries. The Kenai-Russian River area is within driving distance of two main population centers and during the summer months close to 150,000 visitors converge in this area seeking sockeye salmon and other recreational opportunities. Complex challenges, including human/bear conflicts, pose serious challenges for resource agencies.



The Way Forward

In 2007, as a result of ongoing public safety concerns, the Russian River Interagency Coordination Group (RRICG) was organized to collectively and consistently address cross-jurisdictional challenges. The RRICG includes the Chugach National Forest, Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska State Parks, Cook Inlet Regional Incorporated, and the Kenaitze Indian Tribe.

The Objectives of the RRICG are to:

- Coordinate and communicate between agencies and partners
- Develop consistent education, regulation, and enforcement protocols
- Develop strategies and protocols to address human/bear interactions and conflicts
- Develop strategies to protect natural and cultural resources
- Develop a consistent public communication strategy
- Develop a long term interagency management strategy

Accomplishments since the creation of the RRICG:

- Open dialogue and communication between disciplines and agencies
- Developed and implemented interagency strategic plan
- Developed and implemented interagency annual operations plan
- Began process to identify joint regulations regarding attractants through the implementation of consistent temporary orders
- Raised over \$50,000 in grant money for interagency projects
- Grew from 30 to 62 "Stream Watch Ambassador's" volunteer program and expanded the Stream Watch program officially to the USFWS side of the river
- Hired highly effective and engaging interagency staff
- Implemented and maintained habitat restoration efforts with help from volunteers

The future of this unique area must be managed in cooperative atmosphere. Cooperative management helps each land owner in the program meet their mission. Through multiple land agency management and with the help of strong partners, we are encouraging and rewarding responsible human use and fostering respect among the users of the area for the natural and cultural heritage of the Kenai-Russian River system.

More Information

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