

Instream Flow

Goal

Instream Flow. Maintain water quantity and quality sufficient to protect overall ecosystem integrity and to protect the human, fish, and wildlife resources and uses of the region.

Management Guidelines

A. Stream Uses to Consider for Instream Flow Reservation (General). Streams, lakes, and other waterbodies may be considered for instream flow reservations under AS 46.15.145. Such reservations are intended to maintain a specified instream flow or level of water at a specified point on a stream or body of water, or a specified part of a stream, throughout the year or for specified times. The purposes of the reservation, defined in statute, include: 1) protection of fish and wildlife habitat, migration, and propagation; 2) recreation and park purposes; 3) sanitary and water quality purposes; and 4) navigation and transportation purposes.

B. Priorities. Instream flow reservations have been established on Cottonwood Creek, Deception Creek, Little Susitna River and Willow Creek. Applications are pending adjudication for Fish and Meadow creeks. Instream flow reservations should be established over the planning period for Kashwitna, Sheep, Montana, Little Willow, Lily, Fish, Meadow, Wasilla, Spring, Threemile, Lucille, and Goose creeks, as well as the inlet stream of Nancy Lake. Other high value resource streams and lakes should be evaluated, where funding is available, and instream flow reservation applications should be prepared. Proposals for major new developments requiring substantial water use or uses of water that will negatively impact instream flows needed to produce fish, sustain water quality, provide for navigation, and/or recreation should include an evaluation of the need for an instream water reservation or other forms of instream flow protection.

C. Process for Determining Reservations. Requests for instream flow reservations are submitted to the Department for adjudication following the procedures identified in 11 AAC 93.141-147. In general, these procedures estimate the quantity of water seasonally available and review the amount of water already appropriated in consideration of the requested instream flows for the uses and resources to be protected.

D. Other Guidelines Affecting Instream Flow. Several other guidelines will affect instream flow. See other sections of this chapter.