

**Press Release: No. 11-01, January 4, 2011**

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## **Alexander Creek Pike Removal Project Funded**

(Juneau) – The Alaska Department of Fish and Game was recently awarded \$635,000 from the Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund for a four-year program to accelerate efforts to remove northern pike from the Alexander Creek drainage in Northern Cook Inlet. Coupled with funds appropriated by the legislature last session, this award will allow the department to further the objectives of removing spawning northern pike through intensive gillnetting. A program for enumerating king salmon smolt in the area will also be initiated to help monitor the effectiveness of pike removal.

Northern pike, which are not native to areas south and east of the Alaska Range, have been illegally introduced into a number of river basins where they have had very detrimental impacts on other fisheries resources. Alexander Creek in the Susitna River basin is one of the most heavily impacted systems. As an extension of ongoing efforts to gauge distribution and relative abundance of pike within this drainage, a concerted effort will now be made to significantly reduce pike numbers. The overall objective is to restore salmon and resident species populations in this once highly popular fishing destination to long-term sustainable levels that will again provide important sport fishing opportunities.

"We thank the legislature and the local area partnerships for their support of our efforts to reduce the negative impacts of invasive northern pike," said Charles Swanton, director of the ADFG Sport Fish Division. "The investments made should be returned many fold in terms of economic and social benefits resulting from successful implementation this project."