

Instream Flow

Goal

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

Management Guidelines

A. Reservations of Water (General). Streams, lakes, and other water bodies 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. The consumptive uses of water and potential conflicts with instream water use are not significant issues within the planning area. There are no streams where near-term development is likely to result in consumptive use of water that will adversely affect instream water uses. However, reservations of water should be considered while there is little or no competition to ensure reservation of sufficient amounts of water needed for fish and wildlife habitat, migration, and propagation; recreation; transportation and other human uses. This would also serve to identify water available for future uses. Proposals for new developments requiring substantial water use that may negatively impact instream flows should include an assessment of the projects impacts on instream flows and the need for a reservation of water (or any refinements to existing reservations of water) 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.