

TRIP REPORT

State of Alaska
Department of Fish and Game

Field Date(s): September 15-18, 2025
Location(s): Johnson Tract – West Cook Inlet
Objective(s): Fish surveys along proposed port road
Participant(s): J. Brekken and B. Evers
Weather: Mixed
Access: Fixed wing charter and helicopter

Beth Evers and Josh Brekken (ADF&G Habitat) traveled to the Johnson Tract property on a chartered flight from Merrill Field, arriving late afternoon on September 15. The Johnson Tract project is a critical metals project in advanced exploration phase, operated by J T Mining Inc, a wholly owned subsidiary of Contango Ore Inc, headquartered in Fairbanks, AK. The Johnson Tract deposit is located on private property (Cook Inlet Regional Incorporated inholding) within the boundaries of Lake Clark National Park (LCNP). Transportation and port easements for access to the Johnson Tract property were granted to CIRI by the National Park Service across LCNP lands as required under the Cook Inlet Land Exchange to access the coast for shipment of the mining products. J T Mining asked us to conduct fish presence/absence assessments along a portion of their conceptual port access road which traverses through the easements and the private inholding.

A contractor for the J T Mining identified 45 potential stream crossings along the first half of the conceptual port access road and our goal was to sample these for fish presence/absence to inform planning for crossing structures (e.g., culvert/bridge design; Figure 1). Using a chartered helicopter, we attempted to visit and sample these sites over the course of three days. We used an LR-24 backpack electrofisher and scoop net to sample the stream crossing for fish presence. At each site visited, at least 40 wetted widths, or a minimum of 150 meters of the stream, were sampled for fish.

We were able to directly sample 27 of the sites along the western half of the conceptual road route during our allotted time. Fish were captured at seven sites. Fish were not captured at two sites that are distributaries/splits and directly connected part of the stream where fish were present, so we assumed fish are likely to be present at these crossings. Fish weren't captured at 12 of the sampled sites and are unlikely to support fish based on results and observed site conditions. Fish were not captured or observed at five other sampled sites, but habitat conditions appeared suitable, and these sites may support fish.

We couldn't access all the sites due to time and access constraints, but we did survey these visually from the air and made determinations based on geography and similarity to other sampled streams. We determined that 11 of the un-sampled sites were unlikely to support fish as they were very high in their respective drainages, had very steep gradients (>10%), and contained little or no water. We also determined that seven of the un-sampled sites are likely to support fish based on site conditions/suitable habitat, and samples from nearby or similar streams with fish present (similar

landscape position, gradient, and catchment area). Un-sampled sites may be surveyed next field season with improved access (more landing sites). Sites categorized as likely (un-sampled) will need to be sampled or assumed fish are present from a fish passage standpoint. A summary of the sites and survey results are presented in Table 1.

We boarded our charter flight back to Anchorage around 5 pm on September 18, arriving at Merrill Field around 630 pm. Nominations to the ADF&G Anadromous Water Catalog have been submitted and accepted for the seven sites in which fish (Dolly Varden and coho salmon) were captured.

Johnson Tract Fish Survey 2025

Crossing	Elevation (m)	Latitude	Longitude	Fish Results	Habitat Notes	Fish Present	Notes on Fish Presence
47	64.3	60.109058	-152.73483	No fish captured or observed	3' wide, 4" deep, gravel/cobble substrate, thick willows, channel appears to move around - currently cutting through small trees/shrubs, looks like it should support fish, and point is just downstream of #48	Possible	Suitable habitat, close to Bear Creek with no barriers present, stream course appears to move around
48	65.9	60.109320	-152.73530	No fish captured or observed	3' wide, 4" deep, gravel/cobble substrate, thick willows, channel appears to move around - currently cutting through small trees/shrubs	Possible	Suitable habitat, close to Bear Creek with no barriers present, stream course appears to move around
49	68.5	60.108655	-152.73818	No fish - dry channel	Vegetated swale, alders/ferns, no recent evidence of flows	No	Dry, doesn't appear to hold water very often
50	82.7	60.107838	-152.74758	No survey	Part of mainstem Bear Creek, suitable habitat with good flow of water as viewed from the air	Likely	Suitable habitat, fish observed downstream, no barriers
51	105.3	60.107038	-152.75651	No survey	Small drainage area upstream, no stream observed from the air, likely doesn't support year-round fish habitat, steeper gradient	Unlikely	Steep with very little drainage area
52	103.8	60.106995	-152.75701	No survey	Part of mainstem Bear Creek, suitable habitat with good flow of water as viewed from the air	Likely	Suitable habitat, fish observed downstream, no barriers
53	119.5	60.104382	-152.75970	No survey	Part of mainstem Bear Creek, suitable habitat with good flow of water	Likely	Suitable habitat, fish observed downstream, no barriers
54	122.1	60.103980	-152.75999	No survey	Part of mainstem Bear Creek, suitable habitat with good flow of water	Likely	Suitable habitat, fish observed downstream, no barriers
55	171.7	60.090989	-152.76126	No survey	Very high in drainage (very little drainage area), steep gradient, slopes greater than 15%, very unlikely to provide fish habitat, likely freezes or is dry in winter	Unlikely	Steep with very little drainage area, likely dry or frozen in winter
56	185.3	60.091265	-152.76129	No survey	Very high in drainage (very little drainage area), steep gradient, slopes greater than 15%, very unlikely to provide fish habitat, likely freezes or is dry in winter	Unlikely	Steep with very little drainage area, likely dry or frozen in winter
57	189.4	60.091604	-152.76149	No survey	Very high in drainage (very little drainage area), steep gradient, slopes greater than 15%, very unlikely to provide fish habitat, likely freezes or is dry in winter	Unlikely	Steep with very little drainage area, likely dry or frozen in winter
58	188.7	60.091801	-152.76171	No survey	Very high in drainage (very little drainage area), steep gradient, slopes greater than 15%, very unlikely to provide fish habitat, likely freezes or is dry in winter	Unlikely	Steep with very little drainage area, likely dry or frozen in winter
59	165.2	60.101829	-152.76177	No survey	Very high in drainage with very little drainage area, steep gradient, very unlikely to provide fish habitat, likely freezes or is dry in winter	Unlikely	Steep with very little drainage area, likely dry or frozen in winter
60	124.6	60.08410	-152.76235	No survey	Near top of drainage/very little area, very steep gradient, did not see water, but vegetation was thick - very unlikely to provide fish habitat due to steep terrain and elevation in drainage	Unlikely	Steep with very little drainage area, likely dry or frozen in winter
61	172.5	60.098439	-152.76464	No fish captured or observed	small and steep stream, 5% slope, 2' wide, 2" deep, incised/canyon like, bedrock/cobble/gravel substrate, alder/salmonberry veg., cascade nature	No	Steep with very little drainage area, likely dry or frozen in winter

Johnson Tract Fish Survey 2025

Crossing	Elevation (m)	Latitude	Longitude	Fish Results	Habitat Notes	Fish Present	Notes on Fish Presence
62	176.5	60.098955	-152.76466	No fish captured or observed	small and steep stream, 5% slope, 2' wide, 2" deep, incised/canyon like, bedrock/cobble/gravel substrate, alder/salmonberry veg., cascade nature	No	Steep with very little drainage area, likely dry or frozen in winter
63	59.2	60.079006	-152.76634	DV: 400 (male), 350 (female) - in spawning condition; juveniles captured (FL 65-180 mm)	10-15' wide, 6"-2' deep, riffle character, alder banks, cobble/gravel substrate, 1-2% slope	Yes	Dolly Varden present, crossing likely in a spawning reach
64	39.3	60.07529	-152.77608	2 coho salmon (spawning); multiple juvenile coho salmon captured (FL 49-65 mm), DV present	2' wide, 8-10" deep, incised channel, grass/willow riparian, sand/gravel substrate, medium gradient (+1%), drains from remnant beaver pond (fish observed in pond)	Yes	Dolly Varden and coho salmon present
65	39.2	60.076562	-152.78152	DV: 122	3' wide, 1' deep, sand/gravel/silt substrate, drains remnant beaver pond through dam breach, low gradient	Yes	Dolly Varden present, high quality rearing habitat
66	40.4	60.077168	-152.78592	No fish captured or observed	Marshy area, multiple channels in the area (flats), low gradient, lots of iron flocculant, aquatic vegetation and sedges, surveyed channel was 2' wide, 8" deep	Unlikely	Water quality may be an issue for fish habitat at this site; would be helpful to collect water quality parameters (specifically pH)
67	66.1	60.081155	-152.79458	No survey	Drainage evident but we did not observe water (could have been obscured by vegetation)	Likely	Likely suitable habitat based on similarities to #64 and #65
68	69.1	60.082870	-152.79810	No survey	Drainage evident but we did not observe water (could have been obscured by vegetation)	Likely	Likely suitable habitat based on similarities to #64 and #65
69	73.0	60.084413	-152.80127	No fish/dry channel	vegetated swale (alders), not much evidence of flow	No	Very small catchment at this location
70	80.4	60.085447	-152.80391	No fish/dry channel	Dry, cobble and gravel substrate, evidence of high flow, split channel, ~50' wide channel	At times	Site was dry during our visit, stream is a distributary/split of #71 and #72, water present at times with direct connection to #72
71	81.4	60.085655	-152.80496	No fish captured or observed	4' wide, 4" deep, ~2% slope, cobble and gravel substrate, evidence of high flows, split channel, estimated bankfull width of 25 feet	At times	No fish captured, stream is a distributary/split of #70 and #72, water present at times with direct connection to #72
72	82.8	60.085786	-152.80576	DV: 350, 325 mm	~20' wide, 8" deep, cobble/gravel substrate, 2-3% slope, braided/flowing through alders (newer channel)	Yes	Dolly Varden present, crossing possibly in a spawning reach
73	79.8	60.086854	-152.81224	No survey	Thick alder vegetation, drainage path observed	Likely	Habitat appears suitable
74	66.1	60.087815	-152.81807	No fish/dry channel	Dry channel, drainage path evident but no evidence of recent flow, alder/salmonberry/fern vegetation, 3' wide channel, overgrown gravel substrate	No	
75	68.5	60.088727	-152.82360	No Survey	Small drainage area upstream, no stream observed from air, steep gradient, unlikely to provide fish habitat based on conditions found at #74 which has similar drainage area and setting	Unlikely	Did not appear to contain water
76	69.1	60.088834	-152.82425	No Survey	Small drainage area upstream, no stream observed from air, steep gradient, unlikely to provide fish habitat based on conditions found at #74 which has similar drainage area and setting	Unlikely	Did not appear to contain water
77	66.6	60.089621	-152.82903	No fish captured or observed	Same stream as 78 and 79. Decent volume stream that drains flooded area/shallow pond, 5' wide, 8" deep, alder/willow veg., ~1% slope	Possible	Habitat appears suitable

Crossing	Elevation (m)	Latitude	Longitude	Fish Results	Habitat Notes	Fish Present	Notes on Fish Presence
78	67.2	60.089664	-152.82929	No fish captured or observed	Same stream as 77 and 79. Decent volume stream that drains flooded area/shallow pond, 5' wide, 8" deep, alder/willow veg., ~1% slope	Possible	Habitat appears suitable
79	67.0	60.089683	-152.82941	No fish captured or observed	Same stream as 77 and 78. Decent volume stream that drains flooded area/shallow pond, 5' wide, 8" deep, alder/willow veg., ~1% slope	Possible	Habitat appears suitable
80	70.5	60.090175	-152.83332	No Survey	Very small drainage area, no stream visible from air, same drainage as 81, surveyed downstream at 77, 78, and 79 (no fish)	Unlikely	Did not appear to contain water
81	80.7	60.090368	-152.83618	No Survey	Very small drainage area, no stream visible from air, same drainage as 80, surveyed downstream at 77, 78, and 79 (no fish)	Unlikely	Did not appear to contain water
82	90.0	60.091880	-152.8415	No fish captured or observed	1-2' wide, 4-8" deep, organic substrate, low gradient stream on bench above Johnson River, barriers between site and Johnson	No	Very small catchment at this location
83	87.3	60.092552	-152.84476	DV: 78, 65 mm	5-6' wide, 2-6" deep, cobble/gravel substrate, ~2% gradient	Yes	Dolly Varden present
84	84.7	60.092670	-152.84675	No fish - dry channel	gravel substrate, well-established flow path but no water present, ~5' wide channel, riparian veg: alders	No	Dry
85	90.1	60.092742	-152.85303	No fish - dry channel	dry channel in a small canyon (~6' wide), alder/salmonberry veg., gravel/cobble substrate (slightly overgrown)	No	Dry, doesn't appear to hold water very often
86	86.0	60.092553	-152.854005	DV: 75, 80 mm	Side channel of Johnson River, mixed substrate (sand to boulder), located above set of rapids	Yes	Side channel habitat in large and swift river system
87	100.5	60.093402	-152.861895	No fish captured or observed	1.5' wide, 3" deep, sand/gravel substrate, low gradient, small amount of flowing water, small drainage area	No	Very little water
88	119.1	60.093309	-152.888399	No fish captured or observed	2' wide, 2-8" deep, gravel/cobble substrate, small creek that drains beaver pond, cascade character with multiple 2-3' drops	No	Very steep with lots of passage barriers
89	126.3	60.0931895	-152.893969	No fish captured or observed	2.5' wide, 3-6" deep, sand/organic substrate, very little flow, dry or subsurface in some reaches, feeds into small pond	No	Very little water, small catchment area
90	145.3	60.091375	-152.91007	DV: 115, 85, 72 mm CO: 70 mm	12' wide, 5" deep (outside of beaver impoundments), 1-2% gradient, active beaver activity/beaver pond system (small ponds in line with cascading/riffle stream, large substrate (cobble, gravel, organics), willow/alder banks	Yes	Excellent rearing habitat
91	156.6	60.090135	-152.91883	No fish - dry channel	No water, vegetated swale with very small drainage area, terrestrial vegetation in channel pathway	No	Does not appear to contain flowing water very often



TRANSPORTATION EASEMENT SURVEY

September 2025

Fish Present?

- No
- ▲ Likely/Possible
- ▲ Unlikely
- Yes

National Park

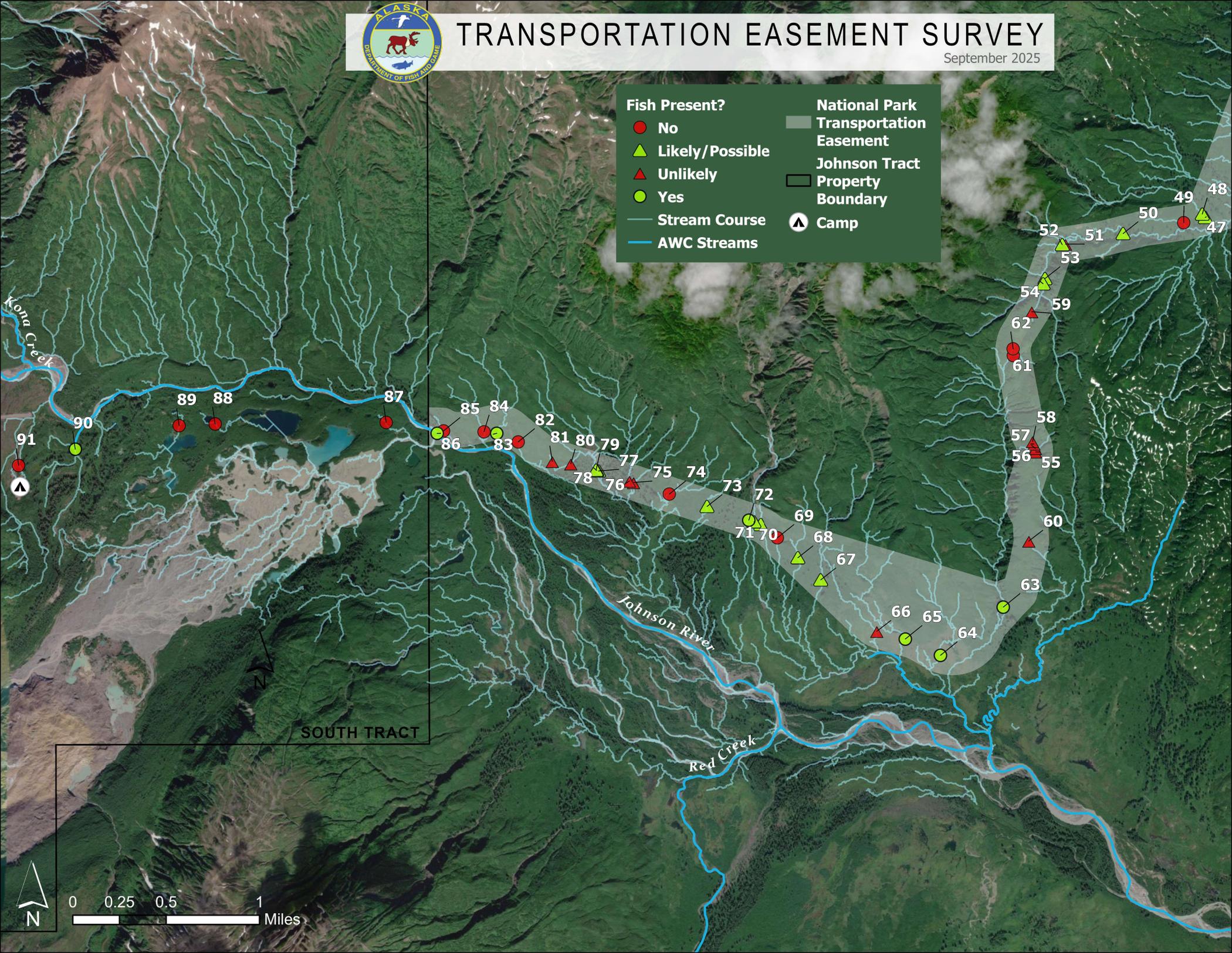
- Transportation Easement
- ▭ Property Boundary

Stream Course

- Stream Course
- AWC Streams

Camp

- ▲ Camp





Crossing No. 47 looking upstream (downstream of No. 48).



Crossing No. 48 looking upstream (upstream of No. 47).



Crossing No. 49.



Crossing No. 61.



Crossing No. 62.



Crossing No. 63.



Dolly Varden at Crossing No. 63.



Coho salmon at Crossing No. 64.



Crossing No. 64.



Crossing No. 65 and Dolly Varden.



Crossing No. 66.



Crossing No. 69.



Crossing No. 70.



Crossing No. 71.



Crossing No. 72.



Dolly Varden at Crossing No. 72.



Crossing No. 74.



Crossing No. 77 (just downstream of No. 78 and 79).



Crossing No. 82.



Crossing No. 83.



Crossing No. 84.



Crossing No. 85.



Side channel at Crossing No. 86.



Johnson River (Crossing No. 86).



Crossing No. 87.



Crossing No. 88.



Crossing No. 89.



Crossing No. 90.