BBRSDA Project Proposal

Proposer: Bristol Bay Native Association's Natural Resources Department

Project Title: Togiak River Salmon Escapement Sonar Feasibility Study

BBRSDA Strategies and Bylaws: The Director of the BBNA Natural Resources Department, Courtenay Gomez, has read the strategies and bylaws of BBRSDA.

BBRSDA Strategic Objective #2: Support Research – Promote research that leads to a better understanding of the science and economics of the Bristol Bay wild salmon fishery in order to improve revenues for fishermen.
Focus: Improve accuracy of pre-season and in-season forecast; and Investigate potential environmental and economic impacts of commercial fishing on the Bristol Bay region.

BBRSDA Strategic Objective #4: Maintain Sustainability of the Fishery – Promote activities that assure the continuation of a biologically and economically healthy and productive commercial fishery.
Focus: Seek the highest level of harvest value consistent with sustainable salmon runs; and when practical, work with processors, government managers, and others to jointly develop activities that support the goal of sustainable fishery.

Concept:
Currently the Alaska Department of Fish & Game enumerates sockeye salmon escapement on the Togiak River using a counting tower near the outlet of Lake Togiak. From 2008 to 2011, the USFWS Office of Subsistence Management provided funding to conduct a mark-recapture study using radio telemetry to estimate the Chinook escapement in the Togiak River. The project was intended to provide data to managers on Chinook salmon run timing, abundance, and population characteristics in the Togiak River to determine if the population could support exploitation rates in subsistence, sport, and commercial fisheries. Although the results of the project did provide managers with an estimate of escapement and run timing it did not provide timely escapement estimates that could be used for inseason management.

As such, BBNA is requesting BBRSDA funding for a sonar feasibility study to more accurately enumerate Togiak River salmon escapement. Costs of this project will include project planning and organizational efforts between BBNA, ADFG and the USFWS Togiak National Wildlife Refuge; as well as logistical services including sonar site identification, technology purchasing and potential land-use agreements with adjacent land owners. Once a site is determined to be adequate for hosting the sonar technology, project staff will develop proposals to submit to various funding agencies to monitor Togiak River salmon escapement using the sonar technology that the BBRSDA has purchased through funding this proposal.

The Principal Investigator for this project will be Courtenay Gomez, Director of Natural Resources at BBNA.

Total Project Costs and BBRSDA Request: BBNA is requesting approximately $115,000 for the purchase of the sonar equipment, logistical services and shipping to Dillingham.

ARIS 1200 - $80,000	ARIS X2 Rotator - $15,500	Shipping & Services - $7,000 approx.
Large Lens Assembly - $8,500	500' cable - $4,000	

Match: Staff time for time spent coordinating and developing this project will serve as in-kind contributions by the Bristol Bay Native Association and the ADFG Division of Commercial Fisheries. This feasibility study will be done in collaboration with these organizations, as well as promoting research partnerships with the USFWS Togiak National Wildlife Refuge and the Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association.

Approximate Date of Completion: Sonar site identification and equipment purchasing will be completed within one fiscal year of the project's initiation.