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Susitna File # 4.3.3.3

ALASKA COOPERATIVE WILDLIFE RESEARCH UNIT

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UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

October 10, 1984

Dr. Charles L. Elliott
Biologist
Harza-Ebasco Susitna Joint Venture
711 "H" Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

HARZA-EBASCO SUSITNA HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT DOCUMENT ROUTING		
LARSON	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	RIZER
FOLIVKA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FAIRBANKS
VAN PATTEN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ELLIOTT
THRALL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
CRADDOCK	<input type="checkbox"/>	
PETTIGREW	<input type="checkbox"/>	
LAMBERT	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ROBINSON	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Dear Dr. Elliott:

Enclosed is a table that provides information about the importance to beaver of the 21 sloughs you listed in your letter of 11 September 1984. We just completed the beaver cache surveys for autumn 1984. The results of this survey and the 1983 cache survey were used to develop the table.

Sloughs listed in your letter were identified on Figures E.3.12 through E.3.17 in Susitna Hydroelectric Project (Volume 6B, Chapter 3, prepared by ACRES for the Alaska Power Authority). I had difficulty locating "side channel MS II" at river mile 115.5 and 115.9, and differentiating between Slough 8A (west) and Slough 8A (east). Also, Slough 22 is not identified on the Figures.

Probably the most significant factor in evaluating the importance of a slough to beaver is whether or not beaver actually overwinter along the slough. The sites where beaver overwinter provide security for the family and serve as natal dens. These overwintering sites are critical for the survival of individual beaver colonies. Sloughs that support overwintering colonies are indicated on the enclosed table.

*HARZA EBASCO

12 OCT 84 4:30
Almost all sloughs below Portage Creek are visited by beavers during summer and autumn. Many of the sloughs provide excellent forage and several are periodically ~~dammed~~ ^{dammed} by beavers. Changing ice and/or overflow conditions probably would have little impact upon foraging use, but relatively stable ice and water levels are needed around overwintering sites through the winter and early spring for beavers to survive.

P.S. I enclosed 8 slides that help explain beaver and habitat associations.

Sincerely,

Philip S. Gipson
Philip S. Gipson
Assistant Unit Leader
and
Associate Professor

Enclosure

cc: R. Sener
R. Fairbanks
J. Woolington

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HARZA-EBASCO SUSITNA JOINT VENTURE

INTRA-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

LOCATION Anchorage DATE October 31, 1984
TO Gene Gemperline NUMBER 4.3.3.2
FROM Chuck Elliott
SUBJECT Beaver-Ice Related Questions in the Susitna River

Listed below is a key to explain the slides I received from Phil Gipson concerning beaver and ice problems in the Susitna River. Duplicate slides accompany this memo. Please pass the key and slides on to the same people in Chicago that received a copy of Gipson's Oct. 10, 1984, letter.

SLIDE KEY: Beaver and Ice Related Slides

- A: Excellent overwintering site. Good food source, deep pools safe from ice damage. Steep mud banks for burrows.
- B: Poor overwintering site even though food is abundant. Problem: no steep banks or firm soil for burrows. No deep pools. Area subject to ice damage.
- C: Typical beaver lodge (under red bush) and autumn food cache.
- D: Old lodge and autumn food cache.
- E: Site where beaver family did not survive winter. Lodge/bank den appeared to have been damaged by ice or high water.
- F: Lodge/bank den abandoned after receiving damage during spring breakup.
- G: Cache washed away by high water in late August.

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*Copy of Phil's letter was
given to Gene on Oct 11.*