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USGS and Kenai Watershed Forum to Collaborate on Fish Habitat and Groundwater Research Project in Kenai, Alaska

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The U.S. Geological Survey and Kenai Watershed Forum announce a new collaboration to study the role of climate change and groundwater management in southcentral Alaska's lowland salmon streams.

Lowland salmon streams are particularly sensitive to the pressures of climate change and development, and salmon in these streams are increasingly stressed by warming water temperatures and decreasing stream flow. Groundwater can help keep these streams cool and flowing. As the climate warms, groundwater will likely be more critical to streams like Beaver Creek near Kenai, Alaska. In addition to Beaver Creek's important fish habitat, groundwater from the Beaver Creek watershed is also the source of municipal drinking water for the City of Kenai as well as private wells. The future of healthy fish habitat in streams like Beaver Creek will rely on balancing the water needs of both people and wildlife.

With funding from the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) Alaska Climate Action Science Center, USGS scientists will collaborate with local nonprofit Kenai Watershed Forum to study Beaver Creek as an example of how climate change and development may affect the future water needs of both humans and fish. With a combination of on the ground fieldwork and modeling, local managers and stakeholders will have access to the best available science to inform decisions. The project will rely on volunteer support from local stakeholders including tribal and nonprofit organizations.

For questions and additional details, contact Benjamin Meyer, Kenai Watershed Forum Water Quality Coordinator (ben@kenaiwatershed.org).