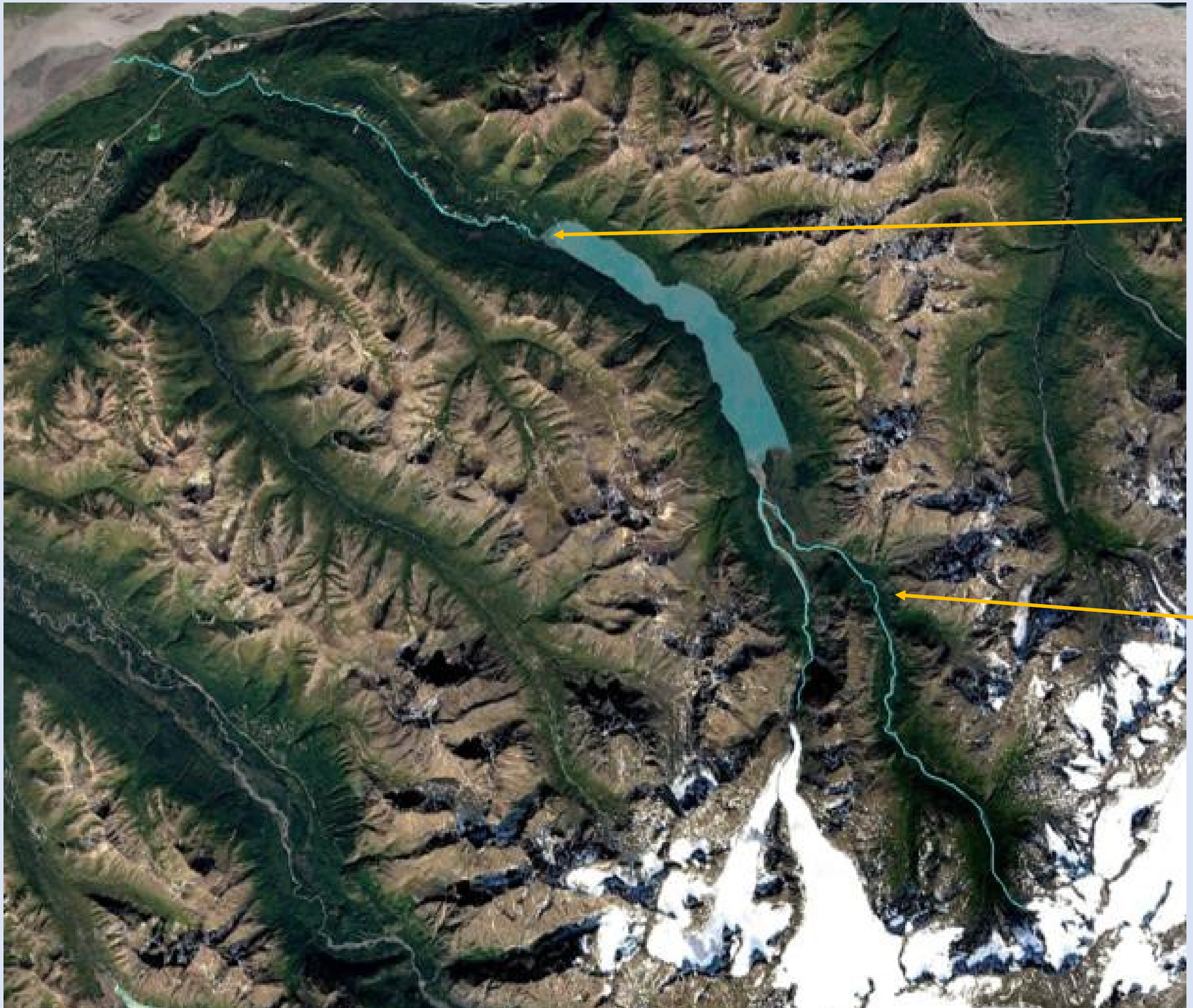
Eklutna Lake and Tributaries Salmon Habitat

E

Illustrating the potential value of salmon passage past the lake dam



Eklutna Lake Dam

East and West Forks Eklutna River

Spawning habitat in a feeder creek to the West Fork River Lake Tributary

Six elders, now deceased, told now Elder Maria Coleman that the Eklutna River used to be “overflowing” with “abundant” fish before the dams. Elder Louis Munson recalled stories of her family fishing for salmon (Łiq’a – the generic Dena’ina term for all salmon species) at the cabin that was located at the upper end of Eklutna Lake prior to the dams being built. Stories included a fish rack and smoking of salmon in quantities to bring back to the village.

Eklutna Lake, Alaska

N6123 W14907

Rec'd 7/22/41 from 2nd Photo Sqdn., Elmendorf Field, Anchorage, Alaska. Original neg. rec'd. 1 May 1944.

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Figure 1.2-2. (P. 4)
Aerial view of the current Eklutna Lake “outlet”. No water flows below the dam. The River below the current dam is dry (the blue line is just drawn through it). A contributing tributary is noted (blue line). Water actually flows backwards from the contributing tributary above the current dam, into Eklutna Lake. The dry varial zone is shown in the upper right, on the shores of the lake. **This dam blocks fish passage to the lake and upriver salmon habitat.**

Eklutna Lake Potential Spawning Habitat

Figure 3.1-1. (P. 13) Upper: Groundwater seepage in (shore) varial zone of drawn down Eklutna Lake Lower: Areas of Eklutna Lake shoreline identified as potential areas for (sockeye) spawning habitat…

(Lake study figures and some text from: Eklutna Hydroelectric Project Draft 2022 Lake Aquatic Habitat and Fish Utilization Study Interim Report)

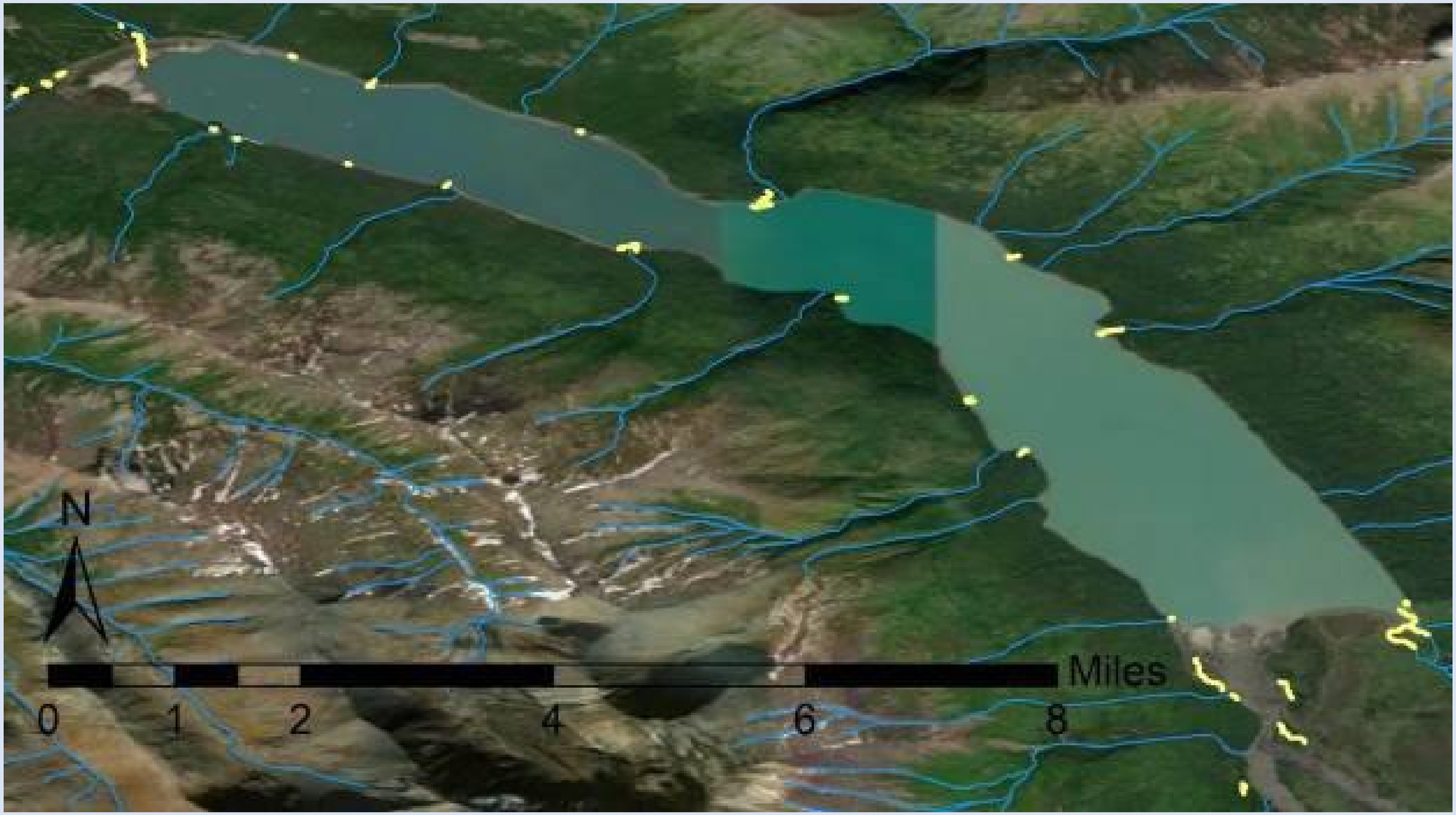


Figure 3.1-2. P. 14 “A total of 331 spawned-out kokanee were observed (at Eklutna Lake) during the survey period…” “Spawned kokanee ranged from 4.5 – 6.5 inches…” Biologists say these would grow to normal sockeye size if allowed to develop in the ocean.

Spawning habitat in the river tributaries system above Eklutna Lake

This entire tributary to the East Fork Eklutna River above Eklutna Lake is good spawning habitat.

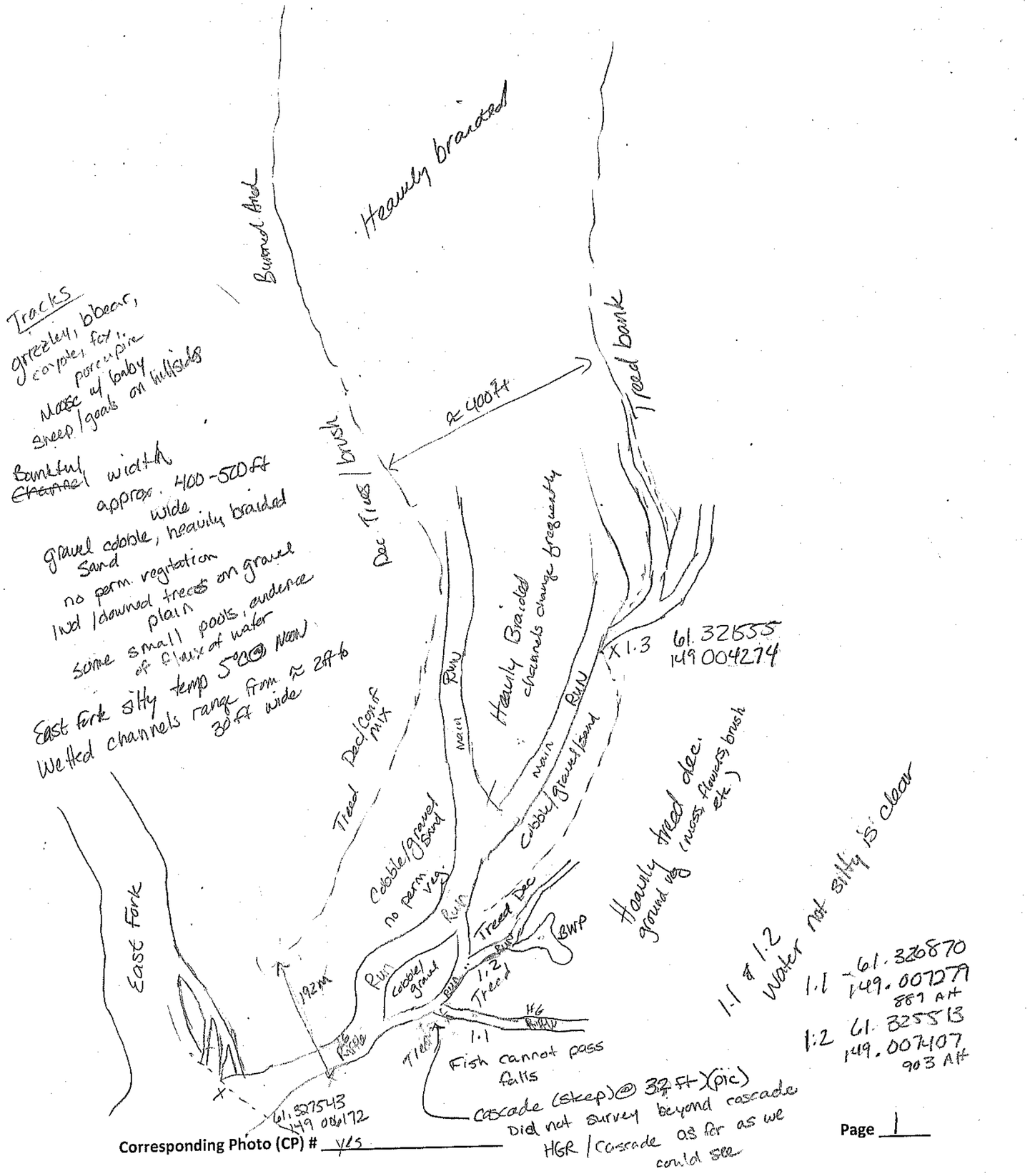
West Fork Tributaries

More West Fork tributaries pictures. Dolly Varden Char are abundant. Spawning king and silver salmon can be imagined with restored passage at the lake dam.

Eklutna River Project 2022

Unit 1

Unit Starting Coordinates: Lat. 32543 N
149.00672 W
AH 876 ft



Corresponding Photo (CP) # Vis

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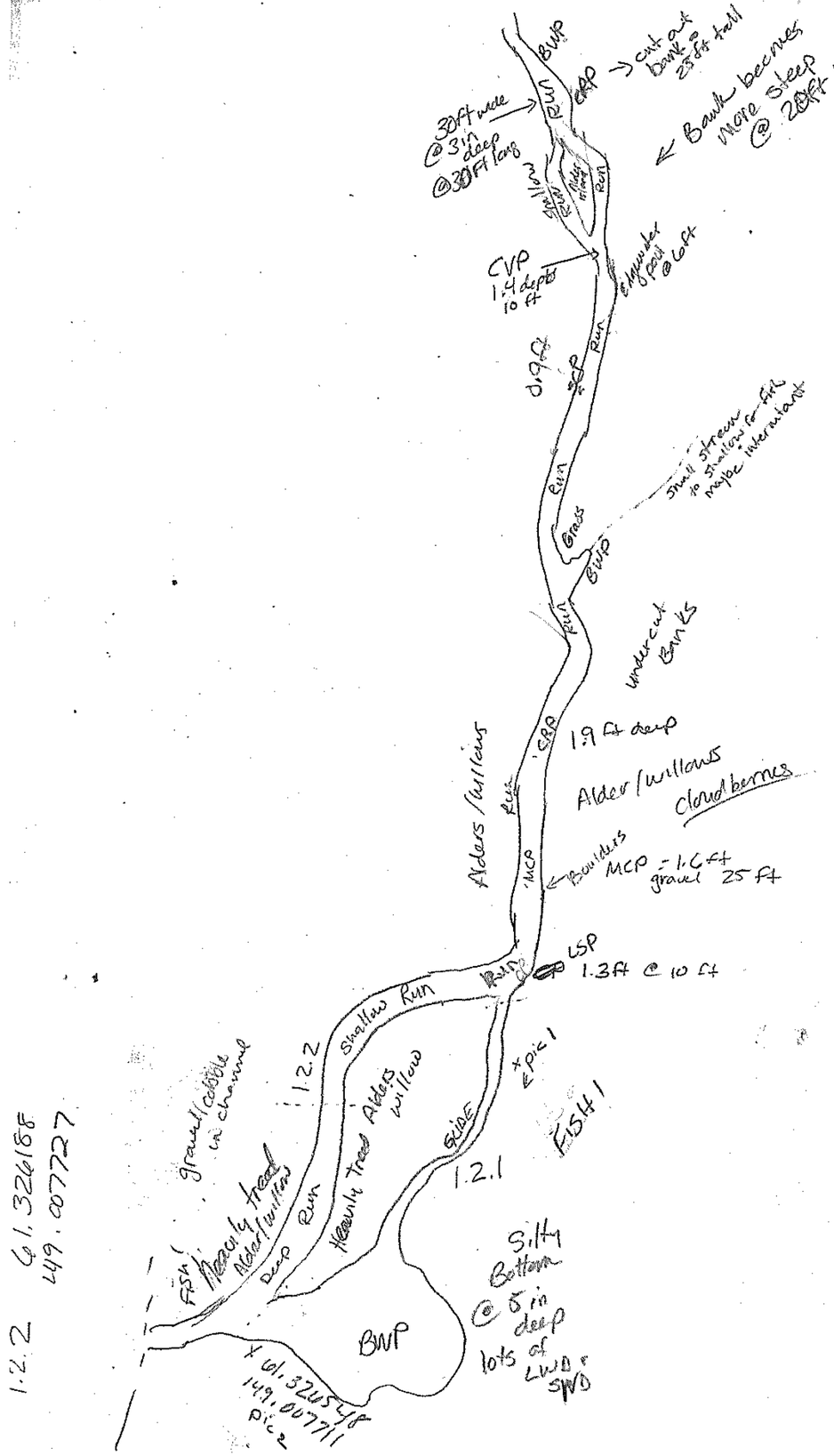
Sample map of West Fork with tributaries to Eklutna Lake, from the Native Village of Eklutna habitat study, 2022

Eklutna River Project 2022

Unit 1.2

Unit Starting Coordinates: _____



Corresponding Photo (CP) # _____

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Extension of field map of clear water tributary to the West Fork – most of which was good spawning habitat.

NVE study estimates over 20 miles of salmon habitat in the lake tributaries system.