



2023

ANNUAL
PERSONAL USE FISHERY
REPORT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Gabriel and Council Members

THROUGH: Terry Eubank, City Manager

FROM: Tyler Best, Parks and Recreation Director

DATE: November 7, 2023

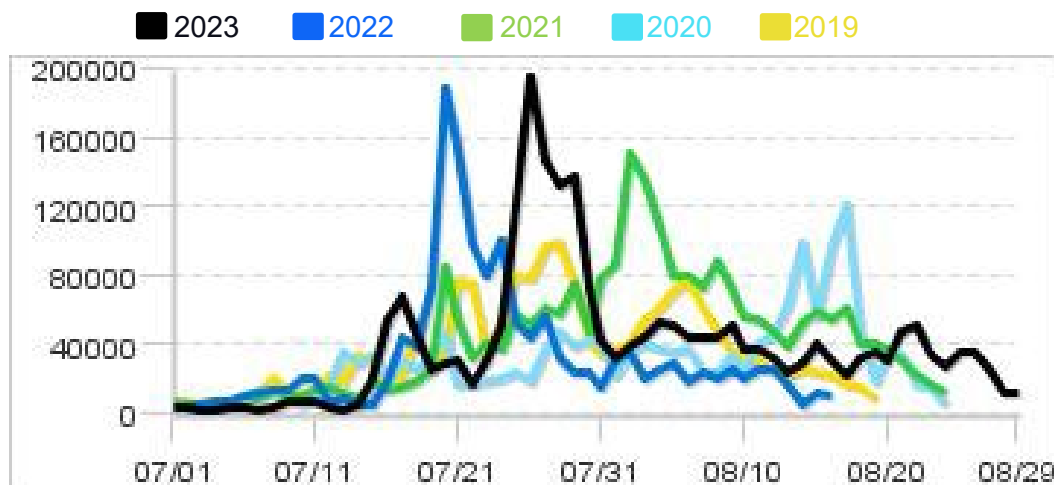
SUBJECT: 2023 Dipnet Report – Parks and Recreation

General Overview

The Dipnet Fishery started July 10 and continued through July 31. Alaska Residents could utilize the Fishery from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. until July 21, when it became open 24 hours a day through July 31.

Escapement of the river totaled over 2.3 million fish, which exceeded the sustainable escapement goal for sockeye by over 1 million. Such a large number of fish had not gone up the river since 2021 when a 2.4 million escapement was recorded.

The following table depicts the daily escapement for the duration of the summer over the last five years.



The sockeye salmon run has been arriving later for the last several years. The peak typically comes in the last week of July. While the peak remains in July with these later runs, the sockeye run seems to stretch further into August, with a large amount of fish making it up the river until the last week of August. Roughly 1 million fish escaped after the Dipnet fishery closed.

In 2023, over half the total escapment made it up the river by July 31. The peak of the run came in the last week of July, and so did some sunny weather. This provided the Dipnet fishery users with great fishing.

Operations in 2023

The no-wake zone along approximately 6,000 lineal feet of the Kenai River was partially installed this year. Only signage on the beach and a map at the dock depicting the no-wake zone could be installed. The City typically partners with Pacstar to utilize their tender for placement of no wake zone buoys but it was unavailable, so no buoys could be installed in the river. The Administration is looking for other options to install no wake buoys in future years.

Operational Changes in 2023

Two operational changes occurred in 2023 worth noting:

- User fees for the Fishery were increased by 5%.
- A bypass lane was constructed to help alleviate traffic on Spruce Street.

DipNet App

2023 marked the 7th anniversary of the Dipnet Kenai Smartphone app. Use of the app was down from about 26 percent from the 5-year average. This could indicate a need for an app update. The Administration is looking at options that could be incorporated into the FY25 budget so the update could roll out for the Dipnet fishery in 2025.

Summary of app usage

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	5yr Average	Diff from Avg
Pageviews	217,100	182,000	228,600	156,600	192,400	131,200	178,160	74%
Sessions	81,300	71,100	99,300	81,400	97,600	71,500	84,180	85%
Unique Sessions	32,300	28,800	40,100	32,500	33,900	28,500	32,760	87%
Downloads	3,758	3,744	4,057	3,190	3,719	2,087	3,359	62%

Parks and Rec

The Parks and Recreation Administrative staff interviewed and hired all temporary positions for the PU Fishery, excluding the temporary enforcement officers. There were 15 temporary employees hired, including six beach shack attendants, two dock shack attendants, six dock attendants, and one beach attendant.

The Parks and Recreation Maintenance Staff work in late June and early July to help set up the Fishery. This includes building temporary fencing to protect the dunes, installing signage, painting parking lines, and setting up the new North Beach Bypass Lane. Throughout the Fishery, the parks staff acts as support staff, including mechanical repairs, supply runs, directing traffic, or helping clean toilets, beaches, and parking lots.

Alaska Mission and Retreats, also known as the Salmon Frenzy, partnered with the City of Kenai and brought various groups of volunteers to serve hot dogs and coffee during the peak days of the PU fishery. At North Beach, they helped direct traffic and also helped pick up litter on the beaches.

Kenai Nordic Ski Team coordinated with The City of Kenai to provide two clean-up days a week for the duration of the Fishery. At the end of the Fishery, the team went through and helped clean the beach and parking lots. Our department provided them with trash bags, gloves, and trash grabbers. The City provides a monetary donation of two thousand dollars to the Nordic Ski Team for this service.

Public Works

The Street Division helps set up the Fishery by placing over 100 jersey barriers for the direction of traffic, placing the fee shacks, installing temporary access roads at both beaches, and creating a new bypass lane off of Spruce Street to help improve traffic flow, which required approximately 200 cubic yards of gravel. During the Fishery, Streets help maintain the roads by grading them and putting down calcium chloride to keep access to the beach and dock accessible and safe.

In a normal year, no wake signs and buoys are placed in the river, but these could not be placed this year because they required the use of Pacific Star Seafoods tender vessel, which was unavailable during the appropriate tides.

Financial Report

Capital Improvements

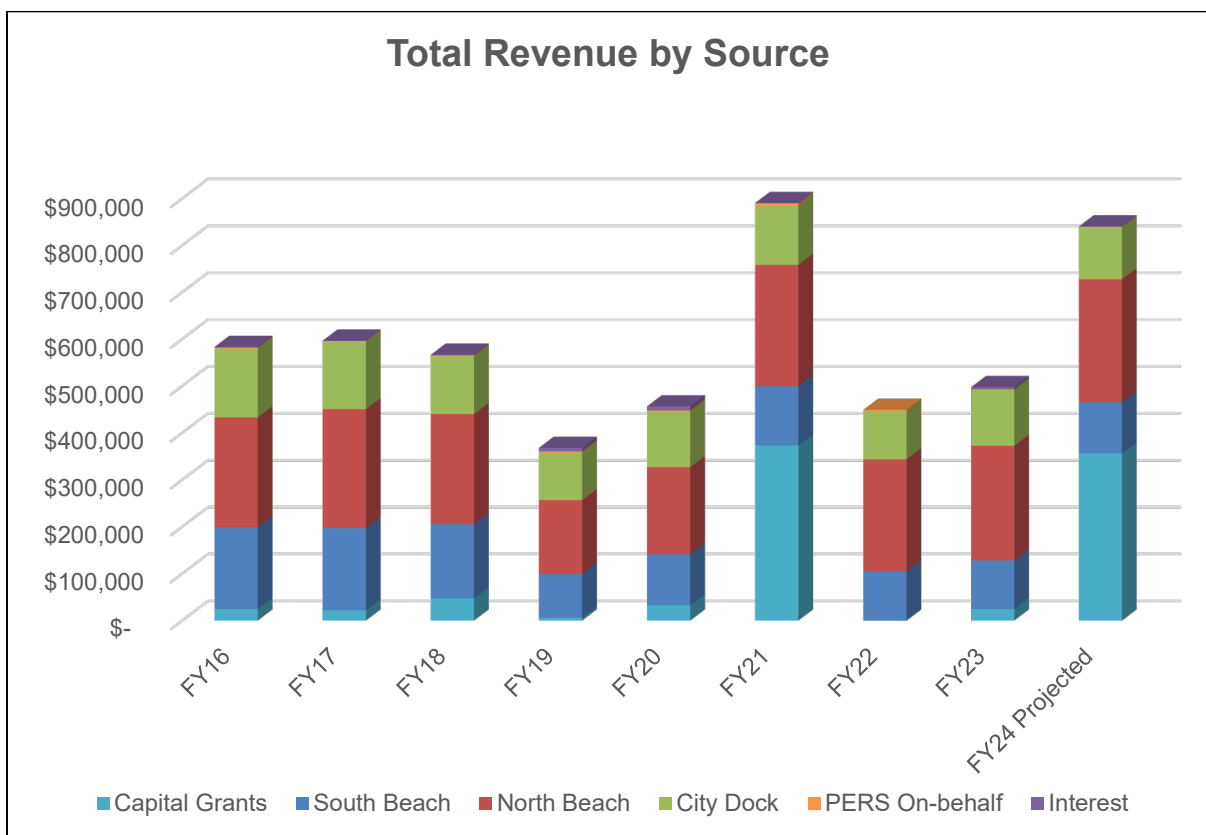
In FY23 \$24,579 of a State of Alaska legislative grant was spent to create a bypass lane on South Spruce Street, allowing local traffic to bypass the fee shacks. \$355,856 remains in the grant for dipnet improvements on the City's north and south beaches. \$125,000 of the \$355,856 remaining was previously allocated to construction of permanent restrooms at the Kenai Little League fields complex. The remaining \$230,856 has been appropriated but is awaiting further action to allocate to specific projects.

FY24 Revenues

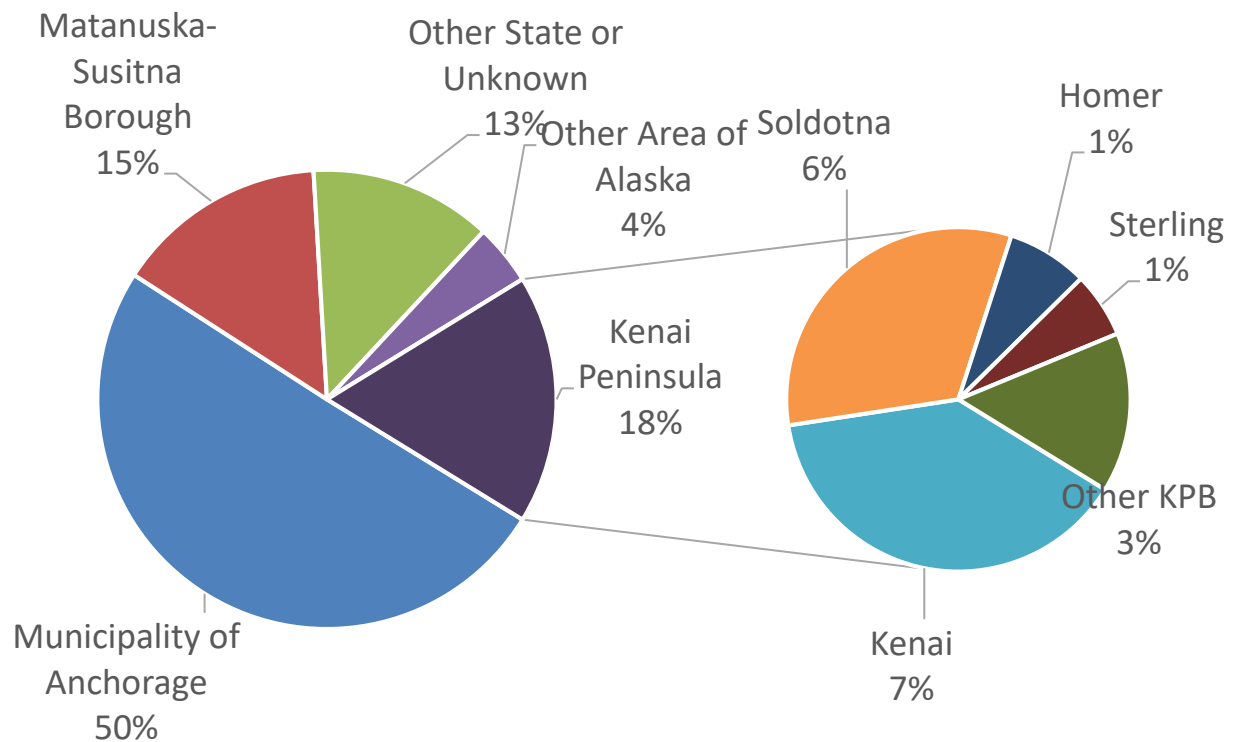
FY24 fees collected increased 3% over FY23. There was a 5% increase in the fees completing the second part of the two-year plan to increase fees a total of 10%. FY24 fishery revenues, not including capital grant revenues and net of sales tax and transaction fees, are projected to be \$482,562, which is \$14,150 less than budgeted but \$15,045 more than FY23 fishery revenues. Capital grant revenue is projected to be \$355,856, assuming complete expenditure of the

remaining state grant. A comparison of FY24 fishery revenue to prior years is shown below, the breakdown by site and service for FY16 thru FY24 is based upon actual transactions

	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24 Projected
South Beach	\$ 174,260	\$ 175,439	\$ 158,665	\$ 93,448	\$ 109,080	\$ 126,577	\$ 104,940	\$ 103,400	\$ 109,421
North Beach	234,140	253,218	234,298	157,293	185,269	258,782	238,471	244,436	262,345
City Dock	146,599	142,901	123,612	101,104	117,172	125,534	103,171	119,681	110,796
Interest	1,580	671	1,522	7,624	8,836	750	(4,412)	4,755	750
PERS On-behalf	2,167	2,688	1,546	2,743	3,355	5,688	2,394	694	1,270
Capital Grants	24,494	21,725	46,920	5,770	32,699	373,076	-	24,579	355,856
Total	\$583,240	\$596,642	\$566,563	\$367,982	\$456,411	\$890,407	\$444,564	\$497,545	\$ 840,438

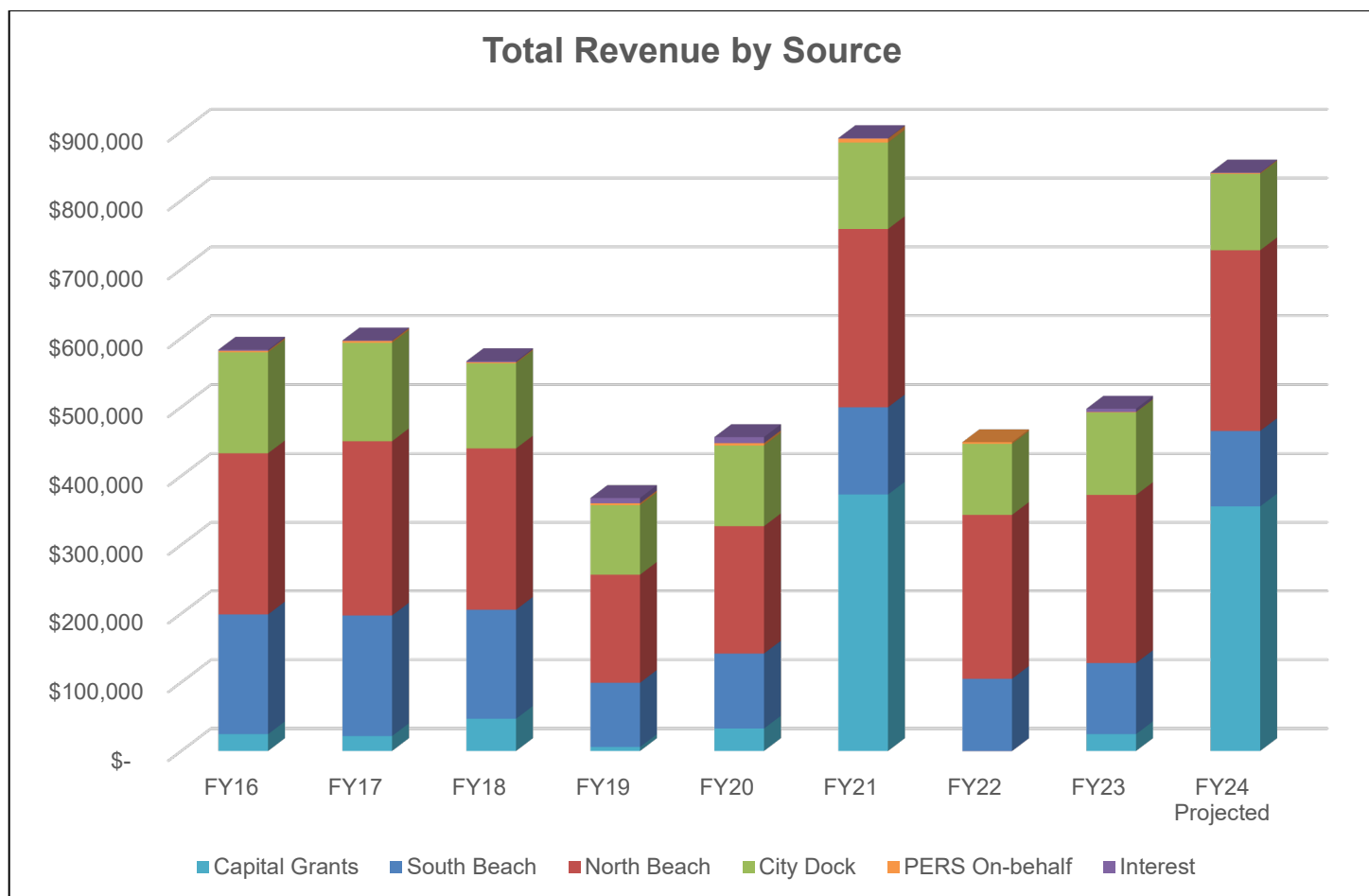


Total Transactions



Total transactions in 2023 were down 1% from 2022, and down 2% from the 5-year average. Person sessions were up 3% over previous years. North Beach continues to increase participation, while participation at the dock and South Beach declined 8% and 3%, respectively, which is a continuing trend. North Beach now accounts for 60% of all transactions, with the dock and South Beach each providing 20%.

The percentages of participants from different regions didn't vary significantly from previous years. 82% of participants are from outside the Kenai Peninsula, with 50% coming from Anchorage and 15% from the Matsu Valley. 7% percent of participants have a 99611 zip code.



Future Considerations

North Beach Third Shack

As the number of transactions continues to grow on North Beach, it may be necessary to provide a third fee shack at this location. The third shack would be located in the lower parking lot and serve as an information booth and a fee shack. Users could renew their permits or upgrade from drop-off passes without having to go up to the top of the hill. This would also provide an extra employee that could be used to backfill other shacks if an employee is sick or resigns. This facility would also serve as an information booth, answering questions, dealing with lost and found items, and could provide a safe location to store the AED.

The cost to provide this third shack would include both capital costs to setup the facility, as well as ongoing costs to cover the employee.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Terry Eubank, City Manager

FROM: Tony Prior, Fire Chief

DATE: October 11, 2023

SUBJECT: Dipnet report for 2023

Fire Department dipnet related call volume in 2023 was higher than in previous years. This season we had 8 dipnet fishery calls reported compared to 4 in 2022, with 6 EMS calls and 2 boat rescue calls. We conducted 2 dipnet “no wake” patrols in coordination with KPD. Total overtime hours for boat patrols were 12.5 hours.

The Fire Department had the following service calls directly related to Dipnet Season:

<u>Fires</u>	0
<u>EMS Calls</u>	6
Trauma	3
Medical	3
Cardiac Arrest	0
<u>Boat Rescues</u>	2
<u>Boat Patrols</u>	2

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Gabriel and Council Members

THROUGH: Terry Eubank, City Manager

FROM: Dave Ross, Police Chief

DATE: September 25, 2023

SUBJECT: **2023 Dipnet Report - Police**

The 2023 Dipnet fishery opened on July 10 and ended as scheduled on July 31. From July 23 until the end of the fishery on July 31, the fishery was open 24 hours per day. In 2023 the City employed five temporary enforcement officers (TEOs) dedicated to Police dipnet operations. Due to one leaving employment early, there were four TEOs the majority of the fishery. Significant 2023 Police dipnet information includes:

- Police handled 86 dipnet-related calls for service during the month of July, approximately 25% less than 2022. Those calls included a wide variety of issues: 14 (9-1-1) misdials, 5 parking problems, 1 traffic congestion, 5 motor vehicle crashes, 3 vehicle lock-outs, 8 lost & found property, 6 disorderly complaints, 2 boat collisions, 1 boat capsize, 5 camping complaints, 2 lost children, 1 theft, and 33 miscellaneous calls for service.
- Despite the very large influx of people on the busiest weekend there were no major police incidents to report during the fishery.
- TEOs wrote 67 dipnet related citations (primarily for paid parking and other parking related violations). This is a substantial reduction from prior years, and TEOs indicated there appeared to be less violators.
- Salmon Frenzy volunteers were again present at the fishery and provided invaluable assistance to the police department. Volunteers assisted at the beach with traffic flow along Kenai Avenue.
- Commercial setnet traffic on the beach was eliminated this year due to an emergency closure of that fishery. The City installed a bypass lane at the pay shacks for local traffic and those that already had purchased passes. This lane worked extremely well to reduce congestion on Spruce Street.
- The 2023 fishery went smoothly from the perspective of the police department.