

Slikok Creek Stream Keepers Grate-Walk

For the last thirteen years students from K-Beach Elementary School have been involved with the Adopt-A-Stream program. Every month tests are taken by 60 to 80 students along the banks of Slikok Creek, a tributary to the Kenai River. The areas where the students enter and exit the test zones are very eroded and show heavy degradation. The banks are very beaten down and slope into the creek, but in areas where tests aren't taken the bank and habitat is very healthy and alive.

My caring for the Kenai project is to replace part of the existing boardwalk by the bank of Slikok Creek and add an additional section of grate walk with steps leading into the water. I will build a 16' x 15' square platform out of light penetrating grating, with two stairways and handrails of the same material leading into the creek for accessibility in performing a variety of tests. The stairs will have to be removable from the water so I will have them hinged, allowing them to be lowered and lifted easily. Farther down stream I will also build a 4' x 5' platform with one set of stairs for additional accessibility and testing.

All of the kids walking on the bank and marsh surrounding the area create an ongoing risk of serious habitat degradation. There is limited space on the existing boardwalk for the students to do their various tests after exiting the water; they often have to step off into the surrounding riparian vegetation in order to have room. The result is destroying the surrounding habitat while trying to preserve the creek. The boardwalk also becomes very slippery when it is wet

and presents a hazard. In the past students have accidentally slipped and fallen into the stream. As a former stream keeper I have experienced this first hand.

The land is owned by the State and I am currently applying for a permit to carry out this project. Mike's welding an experienced grate-walk contractor is going to manufacture the parts and deliver them on sight. The project will then be installed with the help of volunteers. It will take 6 volunteers approximately one week to install it. Possible funding for the project could come from the Kenai Sport Fishing Association, K-Beach PTA, Soldotna Chamber of Commerce Mini grants, Healthy Communities Healthy people, as well as other interested groups.

This project will help make the learning experience much safer and more enjoyable, and will keep the stream and the Kenai River healthier. Other grate walks have rescued banks that were in very poor condition. I am confident that building a grate walk with stairways along the bank of Slikok Creek, a very valuable tributary to the Kenai River, will greatly enhance researcher safety and improve the degraded areas where the Adopt-A-Stream students work and enter and exit the water.