

Briefing for PWSRCAC Board of Directors – September 2026

ACTION ITEM

Sponsor: Naomi Tomco and the Scientific Advisory Committee

Project number and name or topic: 9520 - Decadal Assessment of Nonindigenous Marine Species in Southcentral Alaska

1. **Description of agenda item:** The Board is being asked to accept the report titled “Decadal Assessment of Non-indigenous Marine Species in Southcentral Alaska: Kachemak Bay and Lower Cook Inlet (Part I)” by Dr. Greg Ruiz et al. from the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center dated August 1, 2026. This report describes a broadscale survey for non-indigenous marine species (NIS) across Kachemak Bay conducted in summer 2025 using PVC settlement panels. The panels passively collected organisms throughout the summer season, which were then analyzed with methods to identify native and NIS species. Three NIS were detected in this study, one of which appears to be a new record in Alaska. Contractors will share a brief presentation with the Board summarizing the report’s results and recommendations and will be available to answer questions.

2. **Why is this item important to PWSRCAC:** The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 tasks the Council with monitoring “the environmental impacts of the operation of the terminal facilities and crude oil tankers.” NIS are a continuous threat to Prince William Sound because they can be introduced in the ballast water and on the hulls of tankers transiting to and from the Valdez Marine Terminal. Risk of NIS in Prince William Sound is considered high, and the Council has supported monitoring and detection projects for decades. This project builds on previous broadscale surveys for NIS conducted by the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center and supported by the Council. This project adds to the depth of knowledge of NIS across changes in onboard tanker management of ballast water and changes in environmental conditions that may increase the likelihood of successful invasion. Results can provide an indication of the effectiveness of management and biosecurity efforts in our region.

3. **Previous actions taken by the Board on this item:**

Meeting	Date	Action
Board	5/1/2025	Authorized a sole source contract in FY2026 with the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in an amount not to exceed \$151,344 for Project 9520: Decadal Assessment of Non-Indigenous Marine Species in Southcentral Alaska.

4. **Summary of policy, issues, support, or opposition:** None known.

5. **Committee Recommendation:** SAC supports this project and will provide a recommendation at the Board meeting.

6. **Relationship to LRP and Budget:** Work associated with this project was included in the FY2026 budget under contract 9520.26.01 that was approved by the Board in an amount not to exceed \$151,344. Remaining FY2026 funds were carried over into the FY2027 budget to complete this contract.
7. **Action Requested of the Board of Directors:** Accept the report titled “Decadal Assessment of Non-indigenous Marine Species in Southcentral Alaska: Kachemak Bay and Lower Cook Inlet (Part I)” by Dr. Greg Ruiz et al. dated August 1, 2026, as meeting the terms and conditions of the contract and for distribution to the public.
8. **Alternatives:** None recommended.
9. **Attachments:** Draft report titled “Decadal Assessment of Non-indigenous Marine Species in Southcentral Alaska: Kachemak Bay and Lower Cook Inlet (Part I)” by Dr. Greg Ruiz et al. from the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center.