



April 21, 2023

Coowe Walker
Reserve Manager
Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
2181 Kachemak Drive
Homer, Alaska

Significant Contribution Recognition for Coowe Walker

Throughout Coowe's career at the Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (KBNERR), she has made significant contributions to protect fish habitat throughout the Kenai Peninsula and Cook Inlet region, and the Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership (KPFHP) would like to offer special recognition for these accomplishments. She has successfully maintained monitoring programs in nearshore coastal areas that salmon and marine fisheries depend upon for food sources, and spearheaded innovative research projects to better understand the freshwater ecology and groundwater recharge sources that are vital to healthy anadromous fish populations. Successfully engaging with diverse communities is one of Coowe's strengths, and her voice and perspective have shaped numerous outreach programs and efforts to engage with the many people whose livelihoods depend on healthy salmon populations. Through the "fish need land too" field trips, her enthusiasm for lifting baby salmon out of tiny streams and placing them in fishermen's hands, in their own backyards, has never faded. This is one example of the way Coowe's passion for conservation shines through all of her work.

As an early Steering Committee Member of the KPFHP, Coowe has participated in multiple Conservation Action Plans, the Mountains to Seas Initiative, the Kachemak Bay Environmental Educators Alliance, and numerous other regional partnership efforts to support thriving ecosystems and fisheries. Whether it's identifying scientific research gaps, illuminating the connections of fish habitat conservation to community well-being, advocating for science communication tools, or ensuring that environmental education is offered to students and decision-makers, Coowe reminds the partnership of the importance of a wholistic approach to conservation. As a mentor, leader and researcher, Coowe's work will continue to resonate and inform the work of the KP-FHP into the future.

We wish her the best in her retirement!

Sincerely,

The KPFHP Steering Committee