

02-111  
1TB  
C-D +  
posters  
attached

## Salmon Run Series

Imagine the Kenai Peninsula during summer 2022. The hotels are vacant and stores' sales have dropped 50%. These changes are due to a decline in the salmon population. Our town depends on money from tourists, and tourists don't flock to Kenai for our weather, they come for salmon. By hosting races at Tsalteshi Trails I hope to acquaint the community with the Tsalteshi Trails, increase awareness of the potentially devastating impacts of Reed Canary Grass on our salmon, and raise money for the Kenai Watershed Forum to help clear salmon streams of Reed Canary Grass.

### Information on Reed Canary Grass

Reed Canary Grass is a growing problem for salmon on the Kenai Peninsula. This invasive species thrives in small salmon streams, like Beaver Creek. The Kenai Watershed Forum has been working to control this weed for years by smothering it with tarps and excavating it, but they don't have the necessary funding to fight the immense amount of Reed Canary Grass. When Reed Canary Grass isn't controlled, it prevents salmon from reaching their spawning destination, so they must lay their eggs elsewhere. If this grass is allowed to continue multiplying, salmon will be restricted to smaller and smaller spawning areas. According to Robert Ruffner (2012) of the Kenai Watershed Forum, "Less salmon survive when their eggs are laid in a smaller area." If fewer salmon survive after birth, there will be fewer to catch in the summer. Our tourism industry relies on world-class fishing to lure tourists. If the fishing declines, it will become more difficult to attract them. Becky Waters (2012), assistant manager of the Kenai Aspen Hotel, estimated that 80-85% of their profits come from tourists. With fewer visitors and the money they bring, businesses of the Kenai Peninsula will struggle.

In the past, Reed Canary Grass has affected other states. One hundred fifty-eight silver salmon were found dead in a Reed Canary Grass pasture in King County, Washington in 1999. Reed Canary Grass often goes unnoticed by the general public because its effects aren't as visible as a hydroelectric dam or a mine, but it can be extremely damaging over time. If it isn't controlled, entire streams could be blocked and salmon populations could be decimated.

### Proposed Solution

To help control Reed Canary Grass and minimize its destructive effects on our fisheries, I intend to host races at Tsalteshi Trails to educate the public and provide the Kenai Watershed Forum with the necessary funds to purchase tarps, buy gas for digging machines, and hire workers to combat the weed. I have organized five races, called the Salmon Run Series, to occur every Wednesday at 6:00 P.M. beginning July 11<sup>th</sup> and continuing until August 8<sup>th</sup>. Each five-kilometer race will cost the participants a \$10 entry fee.

The races will be environmentally friendly: registration forms will be printed on eco-paper, water will be offered in biodegradable sugarcane cups, and participants will write their numbers on their hands to eliminate the usage of bibs.

I believe this solution is optimal because not only will the profits benefit the community, but the participants will have the chance to exercise, meet new people, and acquaint themselves with the trails.

### Intended Outcomes

If all goes as planned I will raise \$1250 or more to donate to the Kenai Watershed Forum. The races will be held with no cost because all of the necessary advertisements and materials will

be donated. I have discussed advertisement with KSRM, the *Peninsula Clarion*, and the *Redoubt Reporter*. All of these businesses have agreed to publicize the Salmon Run Series. I've made fliers, handouts, and a facebook page to inform the public of the Salmon Run Series. Tsalteshi Trails will also post a notice about the races on their website. Since I will charge \$10 to enter each race, only 25 people need to participate each week for me to reach my goal of \$1250.

The Salmon Run Series is likely to continue in future years. Until I graduate, I will continue to organize these runs and, since the Kenai Peninsula has a caring and involved community, I believe that local individuals would be glad to continue the tradition.

#### Conclusion

The Salmon Run Series would be a great way for the community to fight Reed Canary Grass and to promote healthy lifestyles. I believe that with the money raised and the increased knowledge of the problems associated with Reed Canary Grass, the Kenai Watershed Forum could make significant progress towards ridding our local streams of this harmful invasive species.

## References

- Gensel, D. (2012, January 10). Personal Interview.
- Holt, B. (2012, January 10). Phone interview.
- O'Connor, J. (2012, January 16). E-mail interview.
- Reed Canarygrass. (2005). *Montana State University*. Retrieved January 19, 2012 from <http://animalrangeextension.montana.edu/articles/forage/species/grasses/Reedcanarygrass.htm>
- The Reed Canary Grass Story. (2012). *Kenai Watershed Forum*. Retrieved January 19, 2012 from [www.kenaiwatershed.org/reedcanarygrass.html](http://www.kenaiwatershed.org/reedcanarygrass.html)
- Reimer, A. (2012, January 11). Phone interview.
- Richards, B. (2012, January 25). Personal interview.
- Ruffner, R. (2012, January 19). Phone interview.
- Steps to go Green. (2012). *Momentum*. Retrieved January 19, 2012 from [www.momentumracingevents.com/sample-page/steps-to-go-green](http://www.momentumracingevents.com/sample-page/steps-to-go-green)
- Waters, B. (2012, February 2). Personal Interview.