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Aquatic Ecology Symposium

Western Water Policy Review Advisory  
Commission (1997)

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2-1-1997

## Instream Flow Protection for Fish and Wildlife in Alaska and the Nation

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### Recommended Citation

Estes, Christopher C.. "Instream Flow Protection for Fish and Wildlife in Alaska and the Nation." (1997).  
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# **INSTREAM FLOW PROTECTION FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE IN ALASKA AND THE NATION**

## **THE NATIONAL INSTREAM FLOW PROGRAM ASSESSMENT PROJECT - NIFPA**

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The multi-year National Instream Flow Program Assessment (NIFPA) project is funded by a grant from the Federal Aid and Sport Fish Restoration Act and is slated for completion in 1997. The primary purpose of NIFPA is to provide recommendations for improving the effectiveness of instream flow protection programs and mechanisms utilized by state fish and wildlife agencies and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

NIFPA participants include the instream flow coordinator or equivalent from the 50 state fish and wildlife agencies, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Water Rights Coordinators (or their equivalents) from the seven USFWS regions, a representative of the National Biological Service, and representatives of the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society. An eleven member NIFPA Steering Committee includes seven of the state fish and wildlife agency instream flow coordinators, three of the USFWS water rights coordinators, and the representative of the National Biological Service. Co-chairs Christopher Estes, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and Keith Bayha, USFWS, conceived of and co-chair the project.

Results of two NIFPA facilitated national workshops (held in Denver) and a series of questionnaires completed by NIFPA participants are being analyzed as part of a peer review process performed by the NIFPA Steering Committee. Facilitation at the workshops was provided by the Organization of Wildlife Planners. Instream flow functions, mechanisms, and programs of each state are being evaluated for six categories: legal, institutional, public participation, hydrological, physical and biological. NIFPA peer reviews will present recommendations for improving individual instream flow protection programs. A supplemental product of the NIFPA project is currently being distributed. It is a video tape of a lecture by Dr. Joseph Sax on the use of the Public Trust Doctrine as an instream flow protection tool for all 50 states. Dr. Sax's lecture was recorded during a portion of the second national NIFPA workshop in the Spring 1996.

Primary recipients of NIFPA products include the lead administrator of each state fish and wildlife agency and USFWS regional office and NIFPA participants. NIFPA products will also be available to others upon request.

For copies of NIFPA products, contact:

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