

**Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development****Grants to Municipalities (AS 37.05.315)****Grant Recipient: Anchorage****Federal Tax ID: 92-0059987****Project Title:****Project Type: Equipment and Materials**

## Anchorage - Fire Department Water Craft

**State Funding Requested: \$71,700**  
One-Time Need**House District: Anchorage Areawide (16-32)****Brief Project Description:**

The purchase of two Personal Water Craft (PWC's) and associated gear will be a better approach to rescuing the rapidly growing number of users that become endangered in shallow water environments of the Turnagain Arm and Knik Arm.

**Funding Plan:**

Total Project Cost:	\$71,700
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2013 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$71,700)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

**Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

The water rescue needs in the shallow waters of Turnagain Arm and Knik Arm is increasing. The currently available rescue crafts employed by public safety agencies for these waters are boats, which in most cases have drafts that exceed the average water depth during low, falling, or rising tides. If these larger vessels become stuck or grounded during rescue operations they are generally unusable until the tide rises to refloat them. A better approach to rescuing the rapidly growing number of users in Turnagain Arm and Knik Arm would be to employ the use of Personal Water Craft (PWC's) in these shallow water environments. Recent incidents over the last few years have highlighted the rapidly increasing use of these areas during shallow water periods. There are several articles regarding the Anchorage Fire Department's responses to kiteboarders in distress, people attempting to walk from Kincaid Park to Fire Island only to become trapped by rising waters, and boaters in distress in Knik Arm and at the mouth of the Little Susitna River. All of these areas involve the potential for shallow water operations to affect a rescue. These operations are severely limited when attempting to use a large vessel such as a boat or rigid hull inflatable.

PWC's are frequently used in rescue operations by fire departments throughout the country. Utilization for both river and ocean rescues is well documented. The Northern Cook Inlet waters create some unique challenges with their silt content and the cooling mechanism's utilized on PWC's. For this reason the ideal PWC for Northern Cook Inlet waters is the Ski Doo GTI Limited 155 as it has a closed circuit cooling system, a braking system, and the ability to carry three people. A breakdown of the items that would allow an agency such as a fire department to adequately meet the challenges posed by operating in this environment would be;

- 2 2012 Sea Doo GTI Limited 155 with traction and side handle kits.
- 1 Karavan Galvanized double place trailer.
- 2 HSA Rescue Sled Complete with Transom Mounting kits and hardware needed for towing.

- 30 Kokatat GFER Gortex/front entry suit with latex cuffs and boots.
- 12 Helmets appropriate for PWC usage.
- Training in PWC operations for 30 People.

These items would allow a rescue team to be fully functional and greatly increase the response capability over what is currently available in the Northern Cook Inlet waters. A cost breakdown of these items would be as follows;

- \$28,000 for Jet Ski's (PWC)
- \$2,000 for Double PWC Trailer
- \$3,000 for Rescue Sleds
- \$200 for Tow Ropes
- \$600 for Traction Kits
- \$300 for Rescue Sled Mounting Hardware
- \$2,400 for Helmets
- \$2,000 for Seat Strap Handles
- \$2,000 for Beach Dolly
- \$27,000 for Surface Rescue Drysuits
- \$6,000 for Training

Total Cost \$71,700

The exploding number of users of the Northern Cook Inlet waters has created a unique challenge for public safety. Several near tragedies have been averted but without a comprehensive response capability by a public agency in shallow waters and rapid currents it is only a matter of time before a tragedy occurs. Providing an agency that has the available manpower to complete the mission with the necessary tools and training will greatly decrease the chances that a citizen who finds themselves in need in these areas will be met without an adequate and meaningful response.

### Project Timeline:

It is the Fire Department's intention to purchase the Personal Water Crafts and associated equipment in 2012.

### Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Anchorage Fire Department

### Grant Recipient Contact Information:

Name: John Drozdowski  
 Title: Deputy Fire Chief  
 Address: 100 E 4th Ave  
 Anchorage, Alaska 99501  
 Phone Number: (907)267-5091  
 Email: droz@muni.org

Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Michael A. Davidson  
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Girdwood, Alaska 99587  
(907) 230-4960 davidson@alaskapffa.org

Date: 2/15/12

Representative Craig Johnson  
Alaska State House of Representatives  
State Capitol Room 216  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Johnson:

Tom Wescott, President of the Alaska Professional Fire Fighters Association asked that I contact your office regarding water rescue needs in the shallow waters of Turnagain Arm and Knik Arm. As an avid recreational user of Turnagain Arm I spend a substantial amount of time in these waters and have seen first hand the challenges faced by rescuers in accessing their shallow waters, with very swift moving tides. The currently available rescue crafts employed by public safety agencies for these waters are boats, which in most cases have drafts that exceed the average water depth during low, falling, or rising tides. If these larger vessels become stuck or grounded during rescue operations they are generally unusable until the tide rises to refloat them. A better approach to rescuing the rapidly growing number of users in Turnagain Arm and Knik Arm would be to employ the use of Personal Water Craft (PWC's) in these shallow water environments. As I'm sure you'll recall recent incidents over the last few years have highlighted the rapidly increasing use of these areas during shallow water periods. The Anchorage Daily News has published several articles regarding the Anchorage Fire Department's responses to kiteboarders in distress, people attempting to walk from Kincaid Park to Fire Island only to become trapped by rising waters, and boaters in distress in Knik Arm and at the mouth of the Little Susitna River. All of these areas involve the potential for shallow water operations to affect a rescue. These operations are severely limited when attempting to use a large vessel such as a boat or rigid hull inflatable.

PWC's are frequently used in rescue operations by fire departments throughout the country. Utilization for both river and ocean rescues is well documented. The Northern Cook Inlet waters create some unique challenges with their silt content and the cooling mechanism's utilized on PWC's. For this reason the ideal PWC for Northern Cook Inlet waters is the Ski Doo GTI Limited 155 as it has a closed circuit cooling system, a braking system, and the ability to carry three people. A breakdown of the items that would allow an agency such as a fire department to adequately meet the challenges posed by operating in this environment would be;

-2012 Sea Doo GTI Limited 155 with traction and side handle kits.	2 Each
-Karavan Galvanized double place trailer	1 Each
-HSA Rescue Sled Complete with Transom Mounting kits and hardware needed to attach the rescue board to the PWC for towing.	2 Each

-Kokatat GFER Gortex/front entry suit with latex cuffs and boots	30 Each
-Helmets appropriate for PWC usage.	12 Each
-Training in PWC operations	30 personnel

These items would allow a rescue team to be fully functional and greatly increase the response capability over what is currently available in the Northern Cook Inlet waters. A cost breakdown of these items would be as follows;

-Jet Ski's (PWC)	2 ea.	\$28,000.00
-Double PWC Trailer	1 ea.	\$2,000.00
-Rescue Sleds	2 ea.	\$3,000.00
-Tow Ropes	2 ea.	\$200.00
-Traction Kits	2 ea.	\$600.00
-Rescue Sled Mounting Hardware	2 ea.	\$300.00
-Helmets	12 ea.	\$2400.00
-Seat Strap Handles	2 Sets	\$200.00
-Beach Dolly	1 ea.	\$2000.00
-Surface Rescue Drysuits	30 ea.	\$27000.00
-Training		\$6000.00
-Total Cost		\$71700.00

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Thanks for taking the time to consider this important issue as it relates to public safety, feel free to contact me anytime if I am needed to provide more information or insight.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Davidson  
Member, Alaska Professional Fire Fighters Association