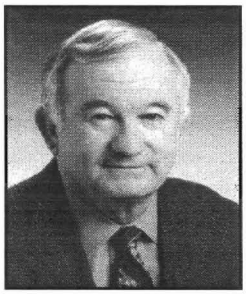
Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council

Restoration Update

December 1996 / Vol. 3 No. 5

Alaska SeaLife Center to integrate public education with a working lab



John Hendricks
Alaska SeaLife Center

The Alaska SeaLife Center in Seward is scheduled to open in May 1998, combining one of the world's premier cold water research facilities with one of the state's top tourist attractions. John Hendricks took over as the SeaLife Center's first director in September, after serving five years as executive director of the Texas State Aquarium. During a recent interview, he outlined his plans for meshing public education with scientific research.

RU. The Alaska SeaLife Center is described as the second marine facility of its type in the world. Where is the other one? And what makes these two facilities so different from others?

JH. The first one is in a fjord in Norway and what makes both radically different is the temperature and the quality of the water. The one in Norway uses raw water from the fjord . . . with direct cold-water feeding from 275 feet down.

RU. What's the big advantage of that?

JH. It's the quality of the water that comes out of there. It could be at 1,000 feet or at 10 feet, but it has to do with where the light penetrates, what the dissolved oxygen is, what are the biological levels in it, plus the chemistry of the water and above all, what is the temperature. The advantage is you bring directly into your facility the habitat of the animals that you want to study.

RU. And Resurrection Bay is ideal.

JH. The bottom of Resurrection Bay is like a fjord. The sides are steep and the water is deep and the ocean comes in its purest form. That's what we're looking for.

RU. The SeaLife Center is getting a reputation already as a place where the scientists will be put on display. Is that accurate?

JH. That is very accurate, but it has also caused great concern among scientists. I can assure them that they are not going to be trotted out like little

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Kodiak

Restoration benefits island residents and wildlife

This is the second in a series of articles describing how Exxon Valdez criminal and civil funds are being invested in the spill region. The Cook Inlet region was covered in the October 1996 issue. Prince William Sound will be featured in the next issue.

Commercial fishers, outdoor recreationists and taxpayers are beginning to feel the benefits from hundreds of millions of dollars being spent within the Kodiak Island Borough as part of restoration efforts using *Exxon Valdez* civil and criminal funds.

Approximately 60 percent of the spill area habitat targeted for protection can be found on Kodiak, Afognak and Shuyak islands. Nearly 335,000 acres have already been protected, much of it added to the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge or developed into the new Afognak Island State Park.

This not only helps protect anadromous rivers and open up private land to fishing, hunting, hiking and camping, but it has also provided a bonus for taxpayers. Last July, Refuge Manager Jay Bellinger surprised the borough with a check for $240,000 in lieu of taxes on the 109,000 acres acquired by the refuge in 1995.

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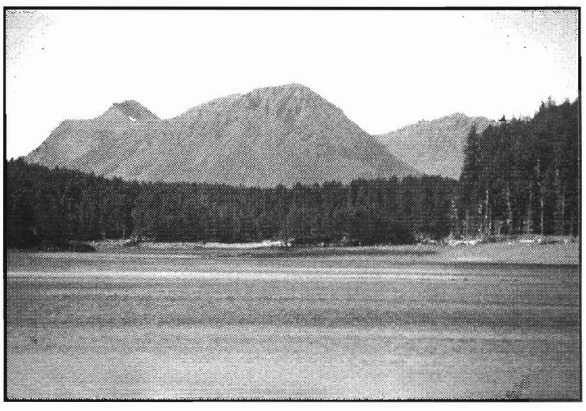
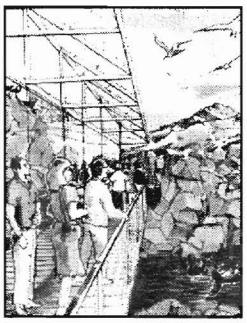


The forested mountains of Afognak Island as seen from Shuyak Island.



"The advantage is the SeaLife Center has people here who will be able to support the scientist. That takes the scientist away from the mechanics and the maintenance and the business of it and lets the scientist focus on the science."

Alaska SeaLife Center

Continued from Page 1

ponies or showdogs and go around the ring and do their little act. The reason they are there is to first of all do science. They're not there to entertain people all day.

Typically in science, exciting things don't happen every day. They happen periodically. So what we want to do is capture those high moments using an electronic medium and to capture the moments when a scientist feels most comfortable, talking about his or her work. Then we can use the electronic medium and use graphics to portray their work, focus on their work and what it means to Alaska and the Gulf of Alaska, and what it means to science in general, put those things on display and let the scientist go back to his office or her office and work.

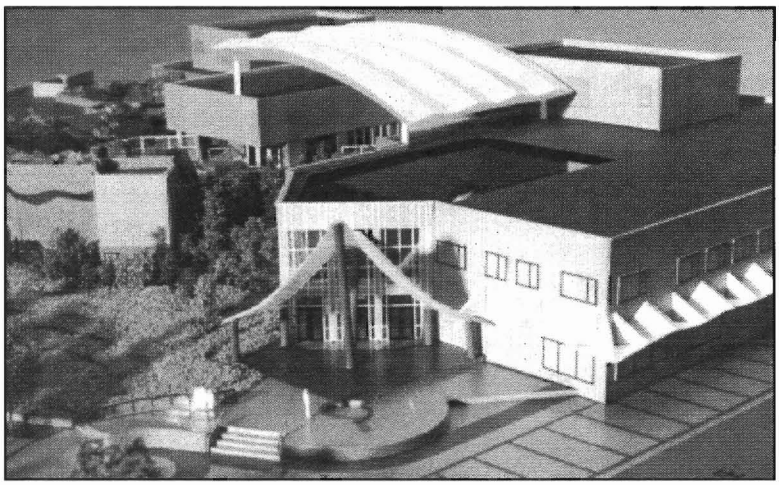
Those who say they don't want to do their research there because they don't want to be a showdog, they don't have to worry about it.

RU. So will there be live interaction between scientists and the public?

JH. There can be if the scientist is comfortable with it. But just for a minute put yourself in the shoes of the SeaLife Center. From the middle of May to the middle of September, there's going to be from 1,000 to 3,000 people coming through the door every day. I mean, who's going to get to see the scientists? I think for the personal interviews with the scientists, we'll probably reserve that for groups (for example, college classes) on a scheduled basis.

RU. How are you going to satisfy the public's curiosity about marine life? The public has come to expect trained seals and jumping dolphins and big aquariums.

JH. As far as big aquariums, we're going to have a big aquarium. We're looking at how we can have several species of Alaska crab. When people come to Alaska and they want to see Alaska, what do you think of? King crab.



The Alaska SeaLife Center is scheduled to open in May 1998.

RU. I'd also like to see a big halibut in its environment.

JH. We're trying to figure out where to put a big halibut in its environment. The best place to put it is in with the birds. It's good for the halibut, but we're not quite sure it's good for the birds. But we're looking, where do we put a halibut and where can we put the biggest halibut we can handle. We're looking because a flounder is a flounder, but a halibut, now that's an impressive flatfish. That's Alaska.

I don't know of anyone else who has a king crab. I've got to go to the experts and ask have you ever tried this? Do you have reports I can borrow? Has this ever been done with king crab and halibut? And we can't do this without an octopus.

RU. The more things you mention here, the bigger the aquarium is getting.

JH. Not really. The three things we talked about are right there. The place for them all is in one room. Standing in one room I could turn around and look at every one of them. This is in addition to the mammals and birds. The invertebrates are going to be mixed with the mammals and the avians, not in the same container, but in the same space.

So you're going to go from an octopus over here to the crabs over there to the sea lion to the seal to the birds. You're really going to be looking under the waters of the Gulf of Alaska. It's going to be a really neat thing. We've got to figure out a way to get some kelp in there or manufacture artificial kelp if the animals keep eating it.

RU. Will there literally be a window under the sea where the public will be able to look directly under Resurrection Bay?

JH. The Japanese did this at Nagoya and other places and what they found was that unless they fed the fish, you could sit there all day long and not see anything. It's the same problem with the scientists. The scientist does something really super interesting maybe every couple weeks. Well that's not enough for the 3,000 people you have in there each day. They want to see it now. So we capture what they do or we replicate it and we put together the whole interesting package that for a scientist and his project might take three years. The public will get it in three minutes in video and graphics. They're going to get it concentrated.

RU. What about the marine mammals? Will they actually be on display?

JH. What we're doing is replicating the environment they live in. It's going to be a very familiar place to a sea lion. We'll be putting sea lions back into something that is very much like their home. The haulouts will be sculpted just like the haulouts out there.

Now, that's also good for the scientists because they have the animals out there in a very realistic environment for observational work. So, it's a controlled environment but it's a simulation of a natural environment. We don't want the environment to influence the animal's behavior or its physiology.

RU. What are the key advantages of conducting research through the SeaLife Center?

JH. It has a full time support staff. Typically what happens is that a scientist wants to do some work and he or she has to come in and hire people, set up a laboratory, set up an office. There are specific equipment needs, laboratory needs, cold storage facilities. In our case they come in and sit down and we ask what is it you want to do? And already on the premises are people who can handle marine mammals. And in many cases the animals will be there. All the mechanics will be there.

RU. Down to secretarial services?

JH. Down to accounting, secretarial services, purchasing, transportation, whatever it is that they want to carry out there work. And it's there 24 hours a day.

Scientists usually have to deal with lots of bureaucracy. I think one of the messages we have to get out there is we have one basic rule and that is to provide the best support possible at the best price possible.

RU. How will the scientists pay their way? Will they be charged set fees?

JH. They have to bring their own grants. The advantage is the SeaLife Center has people here who will be able to support the scientist. That takes the scientist away from the mechanics and the maintenance and the business of it and lets the scientist focus on the science.

RU. Do you envision a day when the SeaLife Center will be putting out its own grants?

JH. I envision a day when the SeaLife Center will be a place to pass grant money through, but we don't want to go through the work of processing the grants and checking out the people. I don't see the SeaLife Center as being a huge generator of funds where it would have the money itself to primarily fund research. I can see it having funds to provide matching funds. But I don't see it as being a primary funder of research, unless it is money passed through us by someone else.

RU. The SeaLife Center is projected to be the state's second largest tourist attraction. Is that correct?

JH. We intend to be second for a little while.

RU. Does that mean you're going to go for first?

JH. Why not?

RU. Is Seward ready for this?

JH. No. That's why I said it'll take a little while. There's an infrastructure there now that will bear 300,000 visitors. But there needs to be other infrastructure development. Parking has got to grow and become more sophisticated. Lodging has to grow somewhat. A number of other amenities are needed for folks to come. It depends where your market is and a lot of our market is going to be out-of-state folks. Our number one major group is going be what we call the rubber tire traffic from outside of Alaska. I could sit at the border point near Beaver Creek and meet most of our customers as they come through customs.

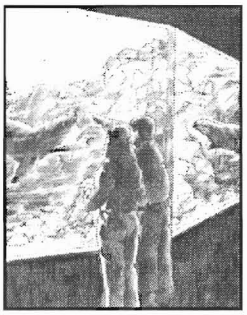
RU. Will the SeaLife Center be a tourism destination in itself or will it be another thing to do for those people going to Seward?

JH. Other then the Alamo, I don't know of any single thing that is a tourism destination in itself. Everything is always a part of a package and we will be thinking of ourselves always as part of the Alaska package.

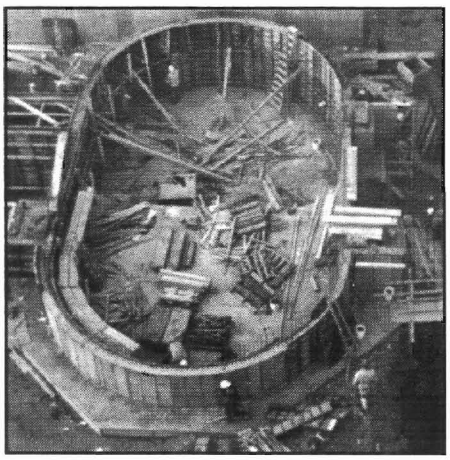
RU. There are a lot of people driving south from Anchorage who turn right at the Sterling Highway and never see Seward. Are you hoping to change their direction?

JH. When we look at that particular market, we'll change their direction.

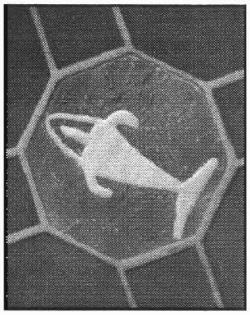
Alaska has its mystique and its magic. And from entrance to exit, all the way through the thing, whatever we do we have to in some way include Alaska's past and its Native people because the people are really interesting too. The relationship between the people, the land, the ocean and the creatures that live in it, I think there's sort of a magic there. I hope to capture at least a taste of it and that's one of the hardest things in the world to do.



"(Researchers) are not going to be trotted out like little ponies or showdogs and go around the ring and do their little act. The reason they are there is to first of all do science. They're not there to entertain people all day."



One of the holding tanks for marine mammals is under construction at the Alaska SeaLife Center.



This custom-made tile greets visitors as they come through the door at the Alutiiq Museum.

Kodiak area restoration

Continued from Page 1

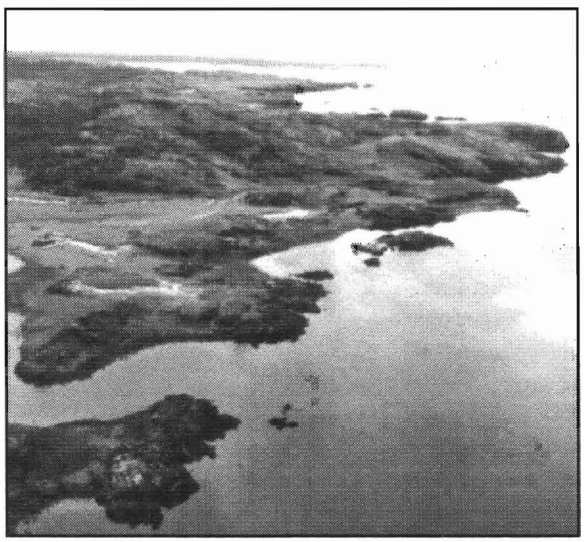
Federal law requires the payment in lieu of taxes, even though the land was not taxed under Native ownership. Bellinger says the borough will receive similar checks each year and the amount will only go up as the refuge acquires more land.

Negotiations continue for permanent protection of 57,082 acres of prime habitat along the Karluk and Sturgeon rivers. Both rivers are vital for producing salmon and are popular with hunters and sportfishers. That land is currently under a non-development easement through the year 2001. Negotiations are also underway for protection of 112,827 acres on Afognak Island, much of it slated for timber harvest.

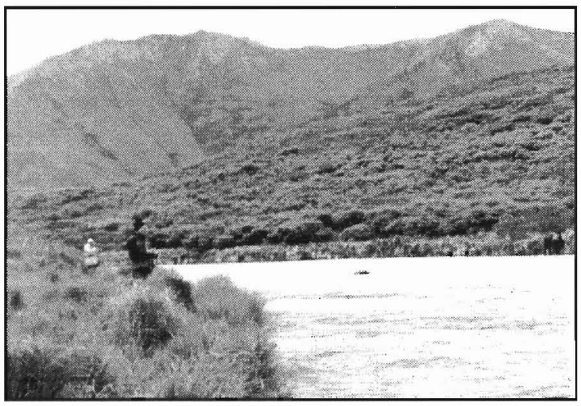
Development of the Near Island Research Facility was made possible partly through the purchase of 26,665 acres on Shuyak Island from the Kodiak Island Borough. The borough agreed to commit $6 million from the $42 million pricetag to help fund construction.

The Trustee Council contributed $1.5 million to help fund the Alutiiq Museum, which opened in May of 1995. The museum's archaeological repository is the only artifact storage facility in the spill region. It is considered a vital resource for preserving and restoring artifacts found during Kodiak-area archaeological excavations.

In addition to the large habitat protection packages, the Trustee Council is considering another 15 sites in the Kodiak Archipelago through its small parcel program. The 1,028-acre tract at Termination Point, near Kodiak, is currently being appraised. Though this was named as the number one priority by the Kodiak Island Borough, ongoing litigation concerning the property may prevent any agreement soon. The borough has also offered more than 100 parcels of 10 acres each, which are currently being evaluated.



The acquisition of 26,625 acres on Shuyak Island could lead to expansion of Shuyak Island State Park with legislative approval.



The Karluk River is a large producer of salmon and is popular with hunters and sport fishers.

The Kodiak Waste Management Program is in its first year of planning an island-wide program to reduce chronic sources of marine pollution, such as waste oil and household cleansers. The Kodiak Island Borough will receive $267,500 this fiscal year to develop the program for island communities. A similar program in Prince William Sound is now in the implementation stage.

To boost the numbers of pink and coho salmon in Kodiak area waters, the Trustee Council funded building of a bypass in Little Waterfall Creek to open up more salmon spawning habitat in the upper reaches of the creek. This project received more than $170,000 over the last three years.

A study of Akalura and Red lakes on Kodiak Island is providing valuable information about how overescapement affects future salmon runs. Each of those lakes experienced overly large numbers of spawning salmon during the summer following the oil spill.

Several ongoing community involvement programs also affect the villages of Kodiak Island. Village residents are monitoring archaeological sites, assisting researchers with traditional knowledge of local ecosystems, and collecting biological samples of harbor seals for scientific study.

The state Division of Parks is investing $1.2 million from the Exxon criminal funds to provide trails, cabins, bridges, parking and latrines on public lands. Some of that money has been passed on to local governments for local projects.

The Department of Fish and Game picked up several weir sites as part of the large parcel program and negotiations continue for acquisition of the Karluk River weir.

Kodiak Island youth are attending a "Spirit Camp" on Afognak Island thanks to a $250,000 grant using criminal funds.

Marine Recreation Projects

These projects, in various stages of planning and construction, are funded through the Exxon criminal settlement. For more information contact either (DNR) Alaska State Parks Kodiak Office 486-6352, (KIB) Kodiak Island Borough 486-9360, or (KOD) City of Kodiak 486-8665.

End of the Road Facilities
Trails, boardwalk, parking area and latrines. (KIB) $105,000

Island Lake Creek Trail
Trail completion, bridge, observation deck, boardwalk, signs. (KIB) $145,000

Abercrombie Park Trail
Beach access, bridges, boardwalks. (DNR) $60,000

Pasagshak River Rec Site
New 8-site campground with latrines. (DNR) $150,000

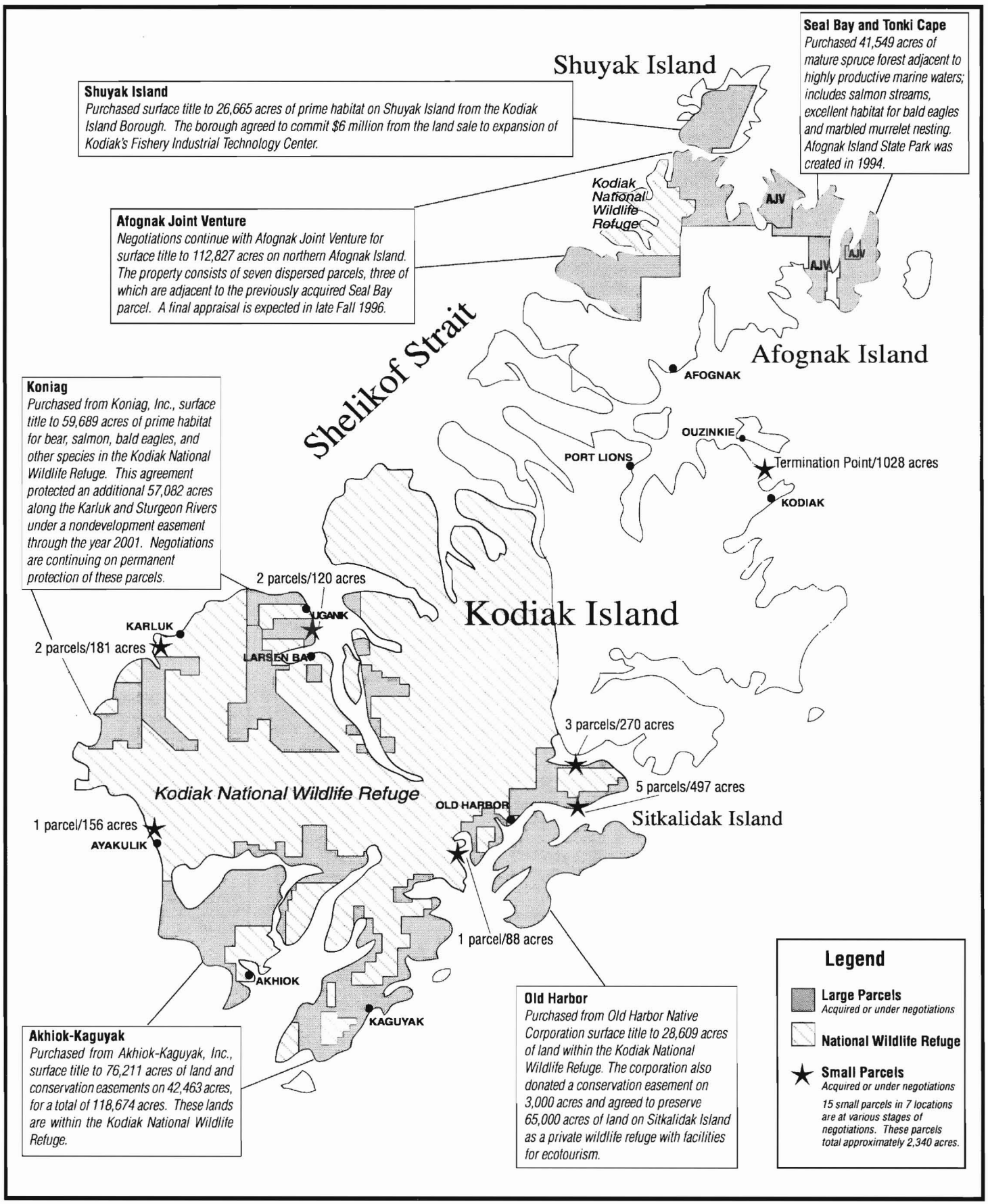
Shuyak Visitor Station
New trails and small visitor facility. (DNR) $150,000

Northend Park/Near Island
Trails to tidelands, decks, bridges, stairs, parking, signs. (KOD) $218,000

Sourdough Flats Rec Site
Trail, viewing stations, boat launch. (DNR) $75,000

Peregrebni Point Park
Launch ramp, floating dock. (DNR) $250,000

Public Use Cabins
Construct 4 cabins in Afognak Is. State Park. (DNR) $80,000


Shuyak Island
Seal Bay and Tonki Cape
Purchased 41,549 acres of mature spruce forest adjacent to highly productive marine waters; includes salmon streams, excellent habitat for bald eagles and marbled murrelet nesting. Afognak Island State Park was created in 1994.
Shuyak Island
Purchased surface title to 26,665 acres of prime habitat on Shuyak Island from the Kodiak Island Borough. The borough agreed to commit $6 million from the land sale to expansion of Kodiak's Fishery Industrial Technology Center.
Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge
AJV
AJV
AJV
Afognak Joint Venture
Negotiations continue with Afognak Joint Venture for surface title to 112,827 acres on northern Afognak Island. The property consists of seven dispersed parcels, three of which are adjacent to the previously acquired Seal Bay parcel. A final appraisal is expected in late Fall 1996.
Shelikof Strait
Afognak Island
AFOGNAK
OUZINKIE
PORT LIONS
Termination Point/1028 acres
KODIAK
Koniag
Purchased from Koniag, Inc., surface title to 59,689 acres of prime habitat for bear, salmon, bald eagles, and other species in the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge. This agreement protected an additional 57,082 acres along the Karluk and Sturgeon Rivers under a nondevelopment easement through the year 2001. Negotiations are continuing on permanent protection of these parcels.
2 parcels/120 acres
UGANIK
KARLUK
2 parcels/181 acres
LARSEN BAY
Kodiak Island
3 parcels/270 acres
Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge
5 parcels/497 acres
OLD HARBOR
Sitkalidak Island
1 parcel/156 acres
AYAKULIK
1 parcel/88 acres
AKHIOK
KAGUYAK
Akhiok-Kaguyak
Purchased from Akhiok-Kaguyak, Inc., surface title to 76,211 acres of land and conservation easements on 42,463 acres, for a total of 118,674 acres. These lands are within the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge.
Old Harbor
Purchased from Old Harbor Native Corporation surface title to 28,609 acres of land within the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge. The corporation also donated a conservation easement on 3,000 acres and agreed to preserve 65,000 acres of land on Sitkalidak Island as a private wildlife refuge with facilities for ecotourism.
Legend
Large Parcels
Acquired or under negotiations
National Wildlife Refuge
Small Parcels
Acquired or under negotiations
15 small parcels in 7 locations are at various stages of negotiations. These parcels total approximately 2,340 acres.

Parks bill resolves Kenai River protection package

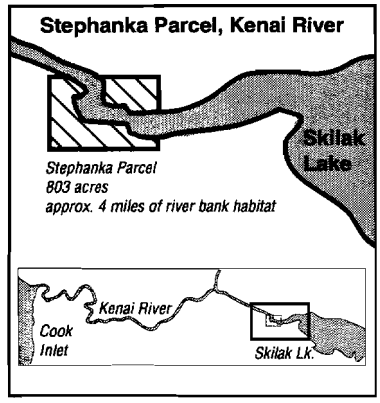
A parks bill signed into law November 12 by President Clinton has made it possible for theTrustee Council to proceed with a plan to protect 3,254 acres of fish and wildlife habitat on the Kenai River drainage.

The Kenai Natives Association has offered to sell the land as part of a larger federal land trade that required Congressional approval. The signing of the parks bill opens the door to complete the acquisition.

The Trustee Council authorized $4 million for the land, which includes 803 acres along the Kenai River one mile downstream from the outlet of Skilak Lake.

Approximately four miles of Kenai River shoreline is protected by the package. The land is an inholding within a designated wilderness area and will be managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The remainder of the package is made up of two tracts along the Moose River, totalling 2,451 acres. The parcels, located three miles northeast of Sterling, protect more than two miles of shoreline used as rearing habitat by sockeye salmon fry.



Negotiations continuing on habitat protection packages

Action continues on a number of fronts to provide long-term protection of large tracts of habitat in the spill area.

A vote by the Chenega shareholders on the Trustee Council's proposal to protect 61,000 acres of land in western Prince William Sound is scheduled for December 4.

Details of a 66,000 acre package involving Tatitlek lands in eastern Prince William Sound are being hammered out. That package is still subject to shareholder approval.

Negotiations are underway once again with Eyak Corporation for a comprehensive protection package that would include Sheep Bay, Windy Bay and Port Gravina. Eyak had earlier rejected an offer of $7million to protect 11,200 acres.

Elsewhere, negotiations continue with English Bay Corp. for their inholdings in Kenai Fjords National Park and with Koniag, Inc., for permanent protection of the Karluk and Sturgeon rivers. The government's appraisal of Afognak Joint Venture lands is expected in early December.

Herring season returning to PWS

Seiners and herring pound fishers will return to Prince William Sound next April for the first harvest of herring since the population crashed in 1993.

Herring stocks are up high enough for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to reopen the fishery. The preliminary forecast for the 1997 spring spawning biomass is 34,000 tons, well above the 22,000 ton minimum needed before a fishery can take place.

Seiners will be allocated 2,965 tons of the 5,100 tons targeted for harvest.

Restoration Workshop plans set

The 1997 Restoration Workshop will be held at the Hotel Captain Cook in Anchorage from January 23-25.

The Restoration Workshop is the annual seminar in which scientists present and review 1996 restoration work and help shape future restoration projects. It's open to the public.

Kai N. Lee, author of *Compass and Gyroscope: Integrating science and politics for the environment*, will be the keynote speaker for the event. Lee is director of the Center for Environmental Studies at Williams College in Massachusetts.

Special rates are available through the Hotel Captain Cook (800-478-3100 within Alaska, 800-843-1950 outside Alaska). To pre-register, call the Restoration Office at 278-8012.

Restoration Update *is published six times each year by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council. Its purpose is to update interested members of the public about actions, policies and plans of the Trustee Council to restore resources and services injured by the Exxon Valdez oil spill.*

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Annual Reports and Final Reports In Print

These reports are available at the Oil Spill Public Information Center, 645 G St., Anchorage, AK 99501, or by calling 907/278-8008, 800/478-7745 (in Alaska) or 800/283-7745 (outside Alaska).

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Salmon Habitat

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Top federal trustees give restoration efforts high marks

The work of the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council should be a model for restoration efforts around the world, top federal trustees said during an October news conference in Washington, D.C. marking the fifth anniversary of the criminal and civil agreements with Exxon.

"Out of one of the darkest moments in Alaska's history, much good has come as a result of the settlement," said Assistant Interior Secretary George T. Frampton, Jr.

The key to the Trustee Council's success, Frampton said, was extensive public participation in developing a restoration plan, which was completed in November 1994. This allowed a remarkable amount of progress over the last two years toward achieving the goals of that plan, he said. "We have a truly comprehensive community-based science and monitoring program," Frampton said.

"There is no place else certainly in the United States — and maybe the world — where a more concentrated effort is being made to study marine resources," Frampton said. In addition, he said, "we have a land acquisition and habitat protection program that has been fantastically successful."

Under Secretary of Agriculture Jim Lyons said that habitat protection was "the most significant long-term method to restore the environment and the species that had been affected by the oil spill." These lands also open up more land for recreational use, he noted. "Make no mistake about it," he said. "These regions include world class fishing rivers and bays and prime wildlife viewing and hunting areas."

Douglas Hall, deputy director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, told reporters that the research and monitoring program "has become a model for scientific cooperation." Data from this research is being used elsewhere in the country where restoration efforts are underway following an oil spill.

Executive Director Molly McCammon and Science Coordinator Stan Senner presented a slide program that detailed the progress being made toward restoration and the work remaining to be done.

Martha Stewart, Governor Knowles' aide in Washington, D.C., told reporters that research has helped Alaska fisheries knowledge advance 25 years over a five-year span. She said that further research is necessary "to better manage the human uses" of the spill area.

Trustee Council Meeting
Friday, December 6, 1996
10 a.m.

Agenda items include a) Public Advisory Group nominations, b) funding of the deferred projects from the FY97 Work Plan, c) discussion of traditional ecological knowledge protocols, d) archiving policy and e) habitat acquisition. A public comment period will begin at 11 a.m.

The public is invited to participate at the Juneau Federal Building, National Marine Fisheries Service Conference Rm 445C. The meeting will be teleconferenced to Anchorage at 645 G Street, 4th Floor Conference Rm. For information on how to participate from other locations, contact Rebecca Williams at 278-8012.

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