

Restoration Update

March 1997 / Vol. 4 No. 1

photo courtesy U.S. Dept. of Agriculture



Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman signs documents for the transfer of Chenega Corporation lands to the U.S. Forest Service and the State of Alaska. Governor Tony Knowles, left, and Chenega Corporation President Chuck Totemoff also took part in the Washington, D.C. signing ceremonies.

'Heart of the spill country' protected

The western portions of Prince William Sound, where oil once sat a foot thick on the beaches, is headed for permanent protection with the formal signing last month of documents transferring the land to the state and federal governments.

Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman joined Gov. Tony Knowles and Chuck Totemoff, president of Chenega Corporation, in signing the documents.

Secretary Glickman noted that the fish and wildlife on Chenega Corporation lands sustained some of the highest level of environmental harm from the spill. Two parcels included in the

See Chenega, Page 7

Negotiators agree on English Bay package

Trustees make offer for habitat within Kenai Fjords National Park

When the final score was tallied, there was little doubt about the public support for protection of habitat within Kenai Fjords National Park. Hundreds of letters, cards, faxes and phone calls poured in to encourage the Trustee Council to approve purchase of 32,000 acres of English Bay Corporation land within the park and an adjacent wildlife refuge.

The culmination of three years of evaluation and negotiation was reached last month when the Trustee Council voted to offer \$14.1 million to purchase the land on the southern coast of the Kenai Peninsula in an effort to aid the recovery of species injured in the 1989 oil spill. The land includes some of the most valuable coastal habitat in the park. Six of seven parcels to be protected were hit by oil during the spill, injuring marine mammals, seabirds and intertidal plants and animals.

Seward Mayor Lou Bencardino told the Trustees that he

See English Bay, Page 3



Chip Dennerlein, a member of the Council's Public Advisory Group and regional director for the National Parks and Conservation Association, testifies on the English Bay lands while Trustees Deborah Williams, Special Assistant to the Secretary, Department of the Interior, and Assistant Attorney General Craig Tillery listen.

photo by Joe Hunt



New PAG members appointed

Five new members were named to the Public Advisory Group last month when Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt formally approved a list submitted by the Trustee Council. The new PAG includes 11 members who were reappointed for a another two-year term.

Eleanor Huffines, of Palmer, has been named to represent commercial tourism on the PAG. Huffines is an instructor with the National Outdoor Leadership School working mostly in Prince William Sound. She replaces Nancy Lethcoe in that seat.

Chuck Meacham was named to replace John French as the representative for science and academia. Meacham, of Juneau, is a former deputy commissioner who retired from the Department of Fish and Game after 21 years in fisheries management and research.

Stacy Studebaker, a science teacher at Kodiak High School, was named to represent recreational users on the group. Studebaker created and hosts "My Green Earth," a nationally broadcast radio program on the environment. She replaces Jim Diehl on the PAG.

Babbitt appointed Kodiak resident Howard Valley to represent the forest products industry, replacing Kim Benton. Valley was raised in a logging camp on Afognak Island and



photo by Joe Hunt

New Public Advisory Group members attended their first meeting March 5. From left to right are Eleanor Huffines, Palmer; Stacy Studebaker, Kodiak; Nancy Yeaton, Nanwalek; Howard Valley, Kodiak; Sheri Buretta, Anchorage; and Torie Baker, Cordova. Not pictured is Chuck Meacham of Juneau.

has spent much of his life working with timber. He is chairman and chief operating officer for Afognak Joint Venture.

The subsistence position on the PAG went to Nancy Yeaton of Nanwalek. Yeaton is the natural resources specialist for the Nanwalek I.R.A. Council. She also serves as a facilitator in the Community Involvement Project, which helps tie restoration activities to community needs. Kodiak resident Brenda Schwantes moved from the subsistence position to a public-at-large position, replacing Gordon Zerbetz.

Torie Baker, Cordova, was named as the representative for commercial fishing replacing Thea Thomas. Baker commercially fishes for herring and salmon in Prince William Sound.

Sheri Buretta, Anchorage, was renamed to the PAG after serving one year with the group.

In addition to the six new members, the Trustees will choose another applicant to fill the public-at-large position vacated by PAG chairman Vern McCorkle, who resigned last month.

The PAG includes five public-at-large members and one member each representing various special interests. Two ex-officio members are appointed to represent the Alaska House and Senate.

The PAG provides advice on key decisions relating to planning, funding and carrying out restoration projects. Its members review specific issues as well as make recommendations concerning the overall direction of the restoration effort.

Public Advisory Group 1997-1999

Rupert Andrews	Hunting/Fishing
Torie Baker	Comm. Fishing
Chris Beck	Public at Large
Pamela Brodie	Environmental
Sheri Buretta	Public at Large
Dave Cobb	Local Gov't
Chip Dennerlein	Conservation
Eleanor Huffines	Tourism
James King	Public at Large
Mary McBurney	Aquaculture
Charles Meacham	Science/Academic
Brenda Schwantes	Public at Large
Stacy Studebaker	Recreation
Chuck Totemoff	Native Landowners
Howard Valley	Forest Products
Nancy Yeaton	Subsistence
Vacant	Public at Large

Ex-Officio Members

Senator Loren Leman
Representative Alan Austerman

Trustees pay tribute to key players

Two high-level Clinton Administration officials who have played key roles in the restoration process have left their positions and their Washington, D.C. oversight of the Trustee Council.

Assistant Secretary of the Interior, George T. Frampton, Jr., has served as a Trustee for the last three years. He said he planned to spend a few months



relaxing with his family before pursuing other work in the natural resources field.

Douglas Hall, deputy director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, recently left that position to work with The Nature Conservancy.

"I think much of what we're accomplishing today and that we've accomplished in the last three and a half years can be attributed directly to their insight, judgment, work and belief in this process," said Deborah Williams, who succeeded Frampton on the Trustee Council.



Photo by Joe Hunt

Trustees Jim Wolfe, U.S. Forest Service; Commissioner Frank Rue, Alaska Department of Fish & Game; Deborah Williams, Special Assistant to the Secretary, Dept. of the Interior; and Assistant Attorney General Craig Tillery listen to testimony on English Bay lands.

English Bay

Continued from Page 1

normally testifies in favor of development proposals. "Normally I'm on the other side of the fence," he said. "But this project is a good one and I support it 100 percent and so does the city."

Chip Dennerlein, a member of the Public Advisory Group and regional director for the National Parks and Conservation Association, said that the Trustees had a unique opportunity. "You are the only hope for the acquisition of these lands and the restoration of these lands in a way that is compatible and favored by the owners as well as the constituent public," he said. "I hope you don't miss this opportunity."

Blocks of English Bay Corporation land are spread throughout the park, with tracts on Resurrection Bay, Aialik Bay, Nuka Bay and several smaller bays, coves and islands. Coastal portions are used by numerous species injured by the spill, including harlequin ducks, black oystercatchers, harbor seals, sea otters and herring. Upland areas support river otters, marbled murrelets, spawning salmon and other species injured by the spill.

The habitat protection pack-

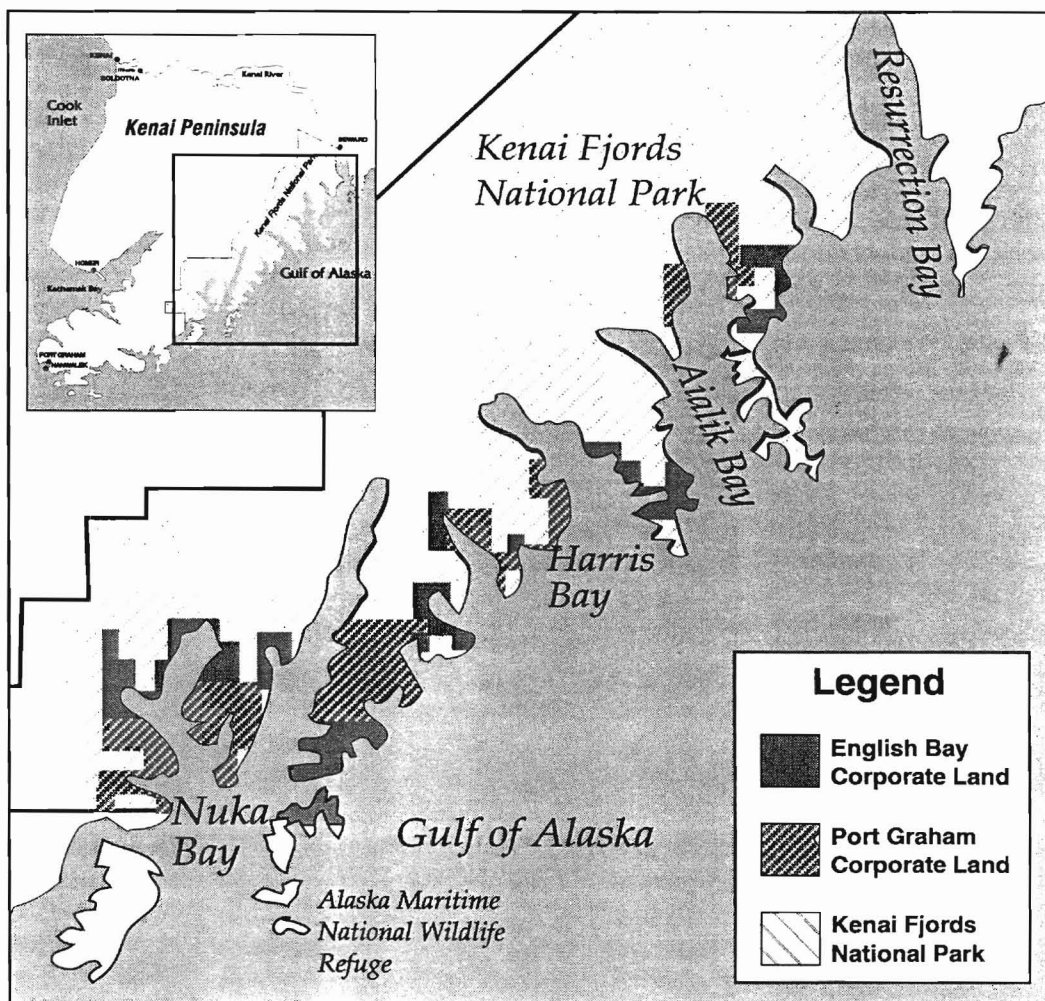
age was negotiated by the U.S. Department of Interior. It would add 30,200 acres of inholdings to the Kenai Fjords National Park and 2,270 acres to the adjacent Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge.

The negotiated price is based on English Bay Corporation retaining a right of access to its land for certain hunting, fishing and other activities. This is consistent with rights retained by other sellers when large parcels

were purchased by the Trustee Council. However, because its land is in a national park where hunting is prohibited, the corporation has agreed to sell its access rights on all but 9,000 acres in the southwest corner of the park, which are located closest to the village of Nanwalek (formerly known as English Bay). Up to \$1.1 million will be spent to acquire these rights and that money will come from the Exxon Valdez criminal settlement with the federal government.

As part of the agreement, English Bay Corporation will deposit \$500,000 from the sale proceeds into a special cultural conservation fund.

Map shows English Bay Corporation land within Kenai Fjords National Park. Discussions continue with Port Graham Corporation concerning the 46,000 acres it owns within the park boundaries.





Prince William Sound

Restoration benefits fisheries, recreation, subsistence

Marine Recreation Projects

These projects, in various stages of planning and construction, are funded through the Exxon criminal settlement.

For more information contact Ron Crenshaw at the Alaska State Parks Anchorage office (269-8704)

Second Salmon Run Facilities
Whittier - camping. \$8,000

Allison Point Fishing Area
Valdez - expand parking, trails, restrooms, fishing dock. \$450,000

Mineral Creek to Shoup Bay Trail
Trail between Valdez and Shoup Bay park. \$200,000

Fleming Spit Recreation Area
Cordova - parking, restrooms, fish tables, access. \$450,000

Mt. Eyak Trail System
Cordova - trail system. \$120,000

Valdez Interpretive Display
Build displays at harbor. \$20,000

W. PWS Interpretive Display
Displays for Portage/Whittier. \$40,000

Whittier Trails
Build hiking trails. \$150,000

Shotgun Cove Hiking Trail
Whittier - build trail. \$60,000

Shoup Bay Public Use Cabins
Cabins, trails, campsites. \$185,000

Dock Point Beach Improvements
Valdez - trails, restrooms, kiosk, parking. \$185,000

Chenega Bay Trail System
Shelter, boardwalks, signs. \$200,000

Passage Canal Campsites
Campsites, trail, shelters. \$170,000

This is the third and final article in a series describing how Exxon Valdez criminal and civil funds are being invested in the spill region. Cook Inlet and Kodiak were covered in previous issues.

Prince William Sound, which took the brunt of the spill injury, is the focus for much of the research, monitoring and restoration efforts funded by the Trustee Council.

Researchers quietly ply the sound throughout the year counting, capturing, tagging, measuring, and sampling key species injured by the spill. Killer whales, harbor seals, sea otters, herring, pink salmon, harlequin ducks, marbled murrelets, and other fish and wildlife are being studied by researchers from throughout Alaska and the nation.

The Council has dedicated more than \$7 million this fiscal year to fund its three primary science projects, the Sound Ecosystem Assessment (SEA) project, the Nearshore Vertebrate Predator (NVP) project, and Alaska Predator Ecosystem Experiment (APEX), which are staged primarily out of Cordova and Whittier. Those three projects are expected to cost more than \$30 million before they are completed. Altogether the Council is expected to spend about \$180 million on research and monitoring.

Research is also having a profound effect on commercial fishing and subsistence as well. Herring research became a high priority when the sound herring fishery collapsed in 1993. The Trustee Council funded several projects that

helped identify a virus as the likely cause for the collapse. Other herring research has discovered for the first time where young herring spend the winter and scientists continue to study the energy reserves necessary for winter survival.

The Trustee Council's habitat protection programs are beginning to take hold in Prince William Sound with Chenega Corporation recently signing documents to sell nearly 60,000 acres to the federal and state governments (see story, page one).

The Trustee Council has accepted an offer of \$33 million from Tatitlek Corporation for a creative land package that includes fee simple purchase, conservation easements or timber easements on 68,000 acres in central Prince William Sound. Shareholders must approve the package by a two-thirds vote.

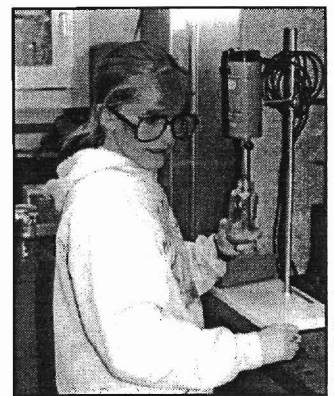
Negotiations continue for up to 72,000 acres of land belonging to Eyak Corporation in eastern Prince William Sound. In 1995 the Trustees paid \$3.65 million for timber rights on 2,052 acres belonging to Eyak Corporation in the Orca Narrows area.

The land packages not only help protect anadromous streams and other vital habitat, but also open up private land to fishing, hunting, hiking and camping. The Native corporations receive capital for future investments and benefits for shareholders. Subsistence users retain access for traditional hunting and fishing.

Several small parcels, valued for their strategic importance, have been purchased or are under consideration by the Trustee Council. An offer to purchase a 315-acre site within the boundaries of Horseshoe Bay State Marine Park on LaTouche Island has been accepted. Acquisition of 33.4 acres near Ellamar and 9.5 acres along the Valdez shoreline are complete.

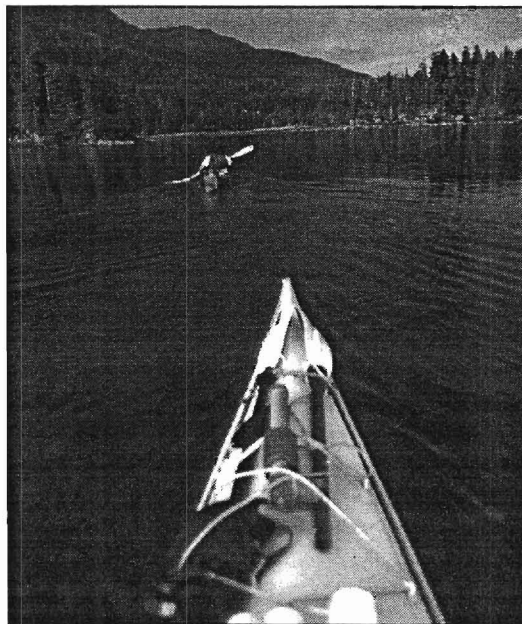
The University of Alaska has offered to sell a 942-acre site on Jack Bay that includes three anadromous streams and good shoreline habitat. This property and two other parcels totaling 67 acres along the Valdez Duck Flats are currently being appraised.

In an effort to reduce chronic pollution in Prince William Sound, the Trustees are funding a program to stop marine pollution at its source. The Sound Waste Management Program, man-



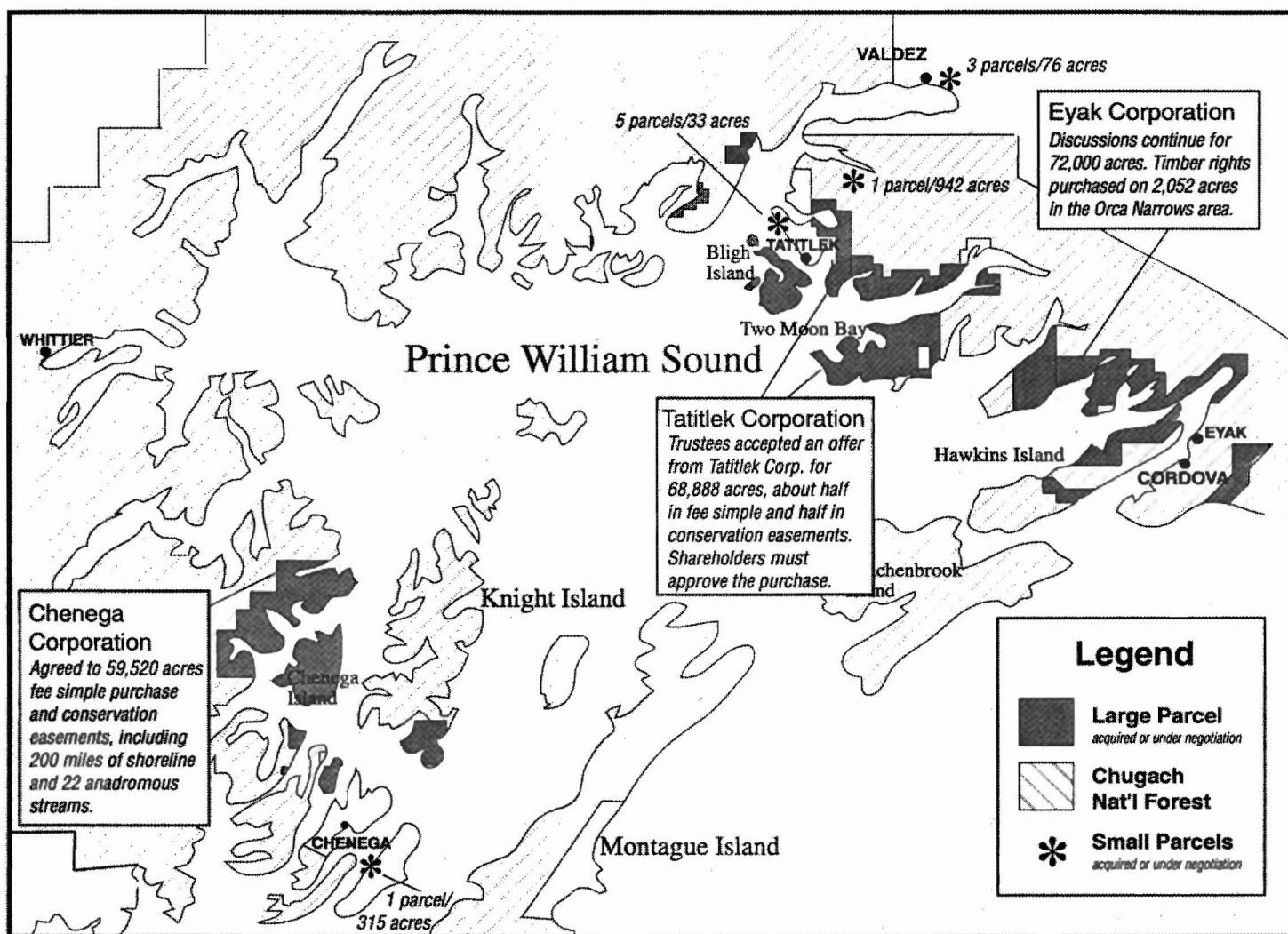
Stacy Evanoff, Chenega Bay, analyzes the pristine content of blue mussels as part of the Youth Area Watch project.

photo by Mel Henning



A kayaker enjoys paddling through Eshamy Bay in western Prince William Sound.

photo by Richard Larson



aged by the Prince William Sound Economic Development Corporation, is designed to reduce small sources of marine pollution by providing facilities and services to properly dispose of used oil, household hazardous waste and recyclables. The \$1.2 million project will coordinate efforts among various communities for temporary storage and then transfer some waste for proper disposal.

Students in the Chugach School District are learning about marine science in their own back yards as part of the Youth Area Watch project. This project places students in the field and in the laboratories where they get directly involved working with scientists, collecting samples, taking measurements and following through with laboratory analysis.

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources is using Exxon criminal settlement funds to build camping areas, hiking trails, interpretive displays, public use cabins, restrooms and other facilities throughout the

sound. This includes \$190,000 for the acquisition of 5.39 acres on Fleming Spit near Cordova for a recreation area. The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation is also working with cities and other groups to improve public facilities outside the park system.

The U.S. Forest Service, using Exxon criminal funds, recently completed purchase of the site of an historic Russian Orthodox church in the abandoned village of Kiniklik in the Northwest corner of the sound. The village was abandoned in 1911 after an epidemic swept through the area. Other small parcels are also being considered for acquisition by the Forest Service.

Criminal funds will also be used by the Forest Service to conduct research in the sound. A \$165,000 research project mapping the nesting habitat of marbled murrelets will take place this summer. Another \$200,000 will be spent over several years to assess management of new growth forests on newly acquired parcels that were logged prior to government acquisition.

Teresa Sauer, biological technician with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, captures and measures kittiwakes as part of the APEX project. APEX research is conducted in Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound with kittiwake surveys around around Eleanor Island and Shoup Bay.



photo by Rob Surgen



Popular Soldotna "fishwalk" protected

The Trustee Council has authorized an offer to acquire one of the most popular Kenai River sport fishing spots in the City of Soldotna, ensuring long term protection of salmon habitat and securing access for fishing.

The Kenai River, where it passes below the Sterling Highway bridge, has long been one of the most popular fishing locations due to its ease of access and the run of red salmon that move upstream along its banks. The Trustee Council agreed to spend \$698,000 to add the key 3.34 acre parcel to the list of Kenai River properties to be protected.

The Kenai River Sportfishing Association recently built a 178-foot fishing platform at the site to allow continued fishing while protecting the banks for rearing salmon. Acquisition of the site will allow extension of the "fishwalk" along the river front some 463 feet further downstream. It also creates a nearly continuous stretch of

publicly owned river front from the bridge to Soldotna's Centennial Park.

"This is an important step for fish and fishermen," said Ben Ellis, executive director of the sport fishing association.

Governor Tony Knowles made acquisition of this and other Kenai River parcels one of his top priorities

to meet the growing needs of sport fishing while at the same time protecting the river.

"Protection and enhancement are the keys to maintaining the Kenai River as a unique and scenic watershed," Knowles said. "We have purchased more than 1,800 acres along the Kenai River, which allows us to protect several miles of shoreline vital for rearing red and king salmon."



Trustees and agency personnel inspect the grated "fishwalk" under the Kenai River bridge in Soldotna as part of tour of the area last fall. The acquisition of the river frontage will allow the fishwalk to be extended another 463 feet downstream.

Collectively, these acquisitions provide a cornerstone for a larger comprehensive Kenai River restoration effort that also includes bank stabilization and revegetation efforts; scientific research and monitoring to enhance the ability of resource managers to protect fishery resources; and improved management of human uses to reduce adverse impacts.

News in brief

Jim King gets seabird award

PAG member Jim King received a lifetime achievement award at the annual Pacific Seabird Group meeting in Portland. King, a career waterfowl biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was honored for his contributions to the conservation and understanding of marine birds.

Dudiak 'Citizen of the Year'

Nick Dudiak, a Fish & Game biologist in Homer since 1977, was named Citizen of the Year by the Homer Chamber of Commerce. Dudiak, known as the father of the Homer Spit Fishing Hole, was honored for his efforts to educate the public about fishing, hunting, and conservation.

APEX wins for best poster

Mark Romano, a graduate student from the University of Oregon working on the APEX project, received the top student award for posters at the Pacific Seabird Group meeting in Portland. Romano's poster described an experiment in which he raised seabirds using diets of different species of forage fish.

Kenai River web site online

ADF&G's web site has added a page to address Kenai River issues and restoration. It can be found at: www.state.ak.us/local/akpages/FISH_GAME/habitat/geninfo/webpage/Home1.htm

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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Bills have been introduced in the state House and Senate to nearly quadruple the size of Shuyak State Park. Companion bills were introduced by Sen. Jerry Mackie and Rep. Alan Austerman to add almost 37,000 acres to the park, a move with widespread support in the Kodiak region.

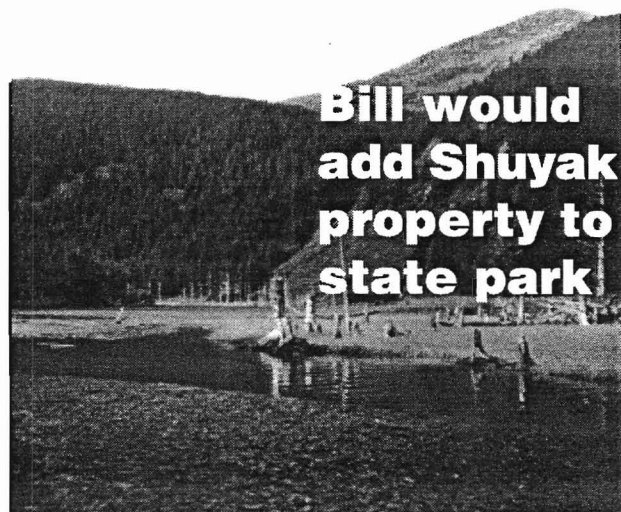
The state obtained title to 26,900 acres in 1995 when the Trustee Council provided the funds for the state to purchase the land from the Kodiak Island Borough for \$42 million. An additional 10,000 acres was already in state hands.

If added to the park, the land will continue to be open to hunting, fishing and trapping, said Claire Holland, Kodiak District State Park Ranger. The island is becoming increasingly popular for fishing, hunting, recreational boat-

ing, hiking and wildlife viewing, she said.

If the Legislature passes the bills, most of the island will become park. About 200 acres of private land remain on the island and there is a 300 acre site that belongs to the federal government.

The House bill (HB89) has passed out of the Resource Committee and is being considered by the Finance Committee. The Senate bill (SB64) is currently in the Resource Committee.



Bill would add Shuyak property to state park

Shuyak Island State Park

photo courtesy Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

Chenega

Continued from Page 1

purchase, Eshamy Bay and Jackpot Bay, are among the highest ranked parcels in the oil spill area for restoration of injured resources. Those two bays contain 22 anadromous streams.

"These lands are invaluable," Glickman said. "And they are now accessible to the people of this nation — for recreational and tourism purposes; for sport fishing and hunting; for simply their magnificent beauty. These uses are not only consistent with habitat protection, but limited development opportunities also will result in economic benefits for the State of Alaska, the Native Alaskans who live on the land and the nation."

Most of the 59,520 acres to be transferred will be managed by the U.S. Forest Service, with the state receiving about 16,000 of those acres. More than 200 miles of shoreline is protected in the package. The corporation will receive \$34 million for the land, \$10 million of which comes from Exxon's criminal

settlement with the federal government.

"The western shores of Prince William Sound include the most beautiful bays and fjords to be found anywhere," Gov. Knowles said. "The Exxon Valdez oil spill did not change that. Today, nearly eight years after the spill, the area remains breathtakingly beautiful."

But it wasn't always that way. Knowles described the land as the heart of the spill country, where wildlife was oiled and re-oiled with each succeeding high tide. "The people of Chenega suffered through this spill as much as any single group," he said. "That's why it's enormously gratifying to be part of a creative package that protects these lands while at the same time meeting the economic needs and traditional subsistence needs of Chenega villagers."

The lands include most of Chenega Island, Fleming Island, the northern half of Evans Island and the southern tip of Knight Island. Under the agreement, the Chenega Corporation retains ownership of

the original village site of Chenega, which was destroyed in the 1964 earthquake. It would also keep several small development sites.

In a vote taken in December, more than 80 percent of Chenega's shareholders approved selling the land and providing conservation easements. "This exchange gives Chenega shareholders a chance to invest in our future without having to develop our land or cut our timber to do it," Totemoff said. "Shareholders benefit economically and our traditions and subsistence lifestyle are protected."

Gov. Knowles called the habitat protection package a win-win-win for the people of Chenega, the natural resources and the general public. "History will judge the Exxon Valdez oil spill as the worst kind of spill in the worst possible place," Knowles said. "But the legacy of this spill will also be about people working together to restore the injured environment and to prevent anything like this from ever happening again."

"This exchange gives Chenega shareholders a chance to invest in our future without having to develop our land or cut our timber to do it. Shareholders benefit economically and our traditions and subsistence lifestyle are protected."

Chuck Totemoff
President, Chenega Corp.

Research looks for ways to reduce stress on herring

No one knows what triggered the deadly virus which decimated the Prince William Sound herring population in 1993 or what might trigger it again. Disease studies funded by the Trustee Council showed that stress, such as that from oil exposure, can cause outbreaks of the virus. Exxon Valdez oil spilled into Prince William Sound just as herring were returning to spawn and oil has always been a primary suspect for stressing the herring population. But what other stressors are there and what can be done to prevent future outbreaks?

Four years after being depleted by disease, herring are finally back to harvestable levels in the sound. As a way to reduced stress on the herring, the Board of Fisheries has enacted changes to the sound's pound fishery.

In a closed pound, the idea is to force a large amount of herring to spawn on a limited amount of kelp. Kelp hangs from several ropes which are strung across a large metal cage and then tons of herring are added to the mix.

"Some of the stressors they've identified that can kick off an outbreak of this disease are factors such as crowding and handling," said Dan Sharp, commercial fisheries biologist with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. "They've done some oil tests where they've ex-

posed herring to crude oil and this has triggered an outbreak of the disease. So there are a number of stressors that can cause the disease to occur."

One study conducted in Puget Sound and near Craig, Alaska, showed that within 48 hours of capture 15-20 percent of the herring in a closed pound were shedding the virus into the water. This has led to cautionary changes in the pound fishery.

Herring pounders are being encouraged to switch tactics. Instead of bringing the herring to the pound, they are being encouraged to bring the pound to the herring. Open pounding involves building a frame, suspending kelp on it, taking it to a place where herring are about to spawn, and hoping they spawn on the kelp.

Pounders which use open pounds will be given greater access to the herring and more kelp for their pens. "We will allow those people using open pounds to use more blades of kelp, roughly 33 percent more," said Sharp.

Closed pounding will still be allowed in the northeast corner of the sound. The Trustee Council recently provided funds to monitor herring from closed pounds for disease. To prevent an outbreak of VHS, researchers are planning to pump all the herring used in closed pounds, count them, test them for disease and sell them to recover some of the costs of the program.

Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council



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Request for Restoration Proposals

The Invitation to Submit Restoration Proposals for Federal Fiscal Year 1998 is now available. Proposals are due April 15, 1997. For more information contact the Trustee Council office at 907-278-8012 or 800-478-7745 (in Alaska) or 800-283-7745 (outside Alaska).

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