

# Alaska

## Exxon coming to Kodiak for input on remaining oil spill settlement money

By SAM FRIEDMAN  
Mirror Writer

The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council leadership comes to town Thursday to ask Kodiak residents how the council should prioritize approximately \$100 million remaining in oil spill settlement money.

Stacy Studebaker, who chairs Kodiak's EVOS Trustee Council Public Advisory Committee said preservation of popular recreation destination Termination Point will likely come up at the meeting — even though the council has already done all it can to prioritize buying the 1,026-acre plot from landowner Native Village Corporation Leisnoi Inc.

"I've been hearing from many community members about their interest in preserving Termination Point for public recreation," she said in an e-mail. "However, the Trustee Council's hands are tied until the owner is willing to begin a conversation about selling it," she said.

The EVOS Trustee Council leadership is in Kodiak specifically to

receive public comment on a supplemental environmental impact study, a document that will be used to narrow the scope of the council's conservation and scientific mission.

"Instead of studying all of the natural resources, the council will have to choose the most affected," Studebaker said.

Pacific herring is one especially important resource because it has not recovered since the spill and it is a food source for other affected species. Historically, it's also a commercial fishery.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) — which is preparing the supplemental environmental impact study as a member of the Council — lists five areas of focus for the council's remaining resources: herring, lingering oil; long-term marine condition moni-

When: Thursday 6 to 8 p.m.  
Where: The Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge visitor center.  
What: Members of the public will have three minutes to comment.  
Additional comments may be submitted at [dkg.evos.restoration@alaska.gov](mailto:dkg.evos.restoration@alaska.gov).  
The trustee council will ask guests to put their name and comments on a provided card so guests can comment in the order of arrival.

toring; harbor protection and marine restoration; and habitat acquisition and protection.

In another sign of the trustee council's downsizing, the council plans to reduce its office space next to the Egan Convention Center in downtown Anchorage, Studebaker said. The council has spent about \$45 million in administrative costs since its inception.

In addition to narrowing the scope of its activities, the council will soon have to decide which nonprofits and governmental should take over existing projects.

"They're dealing with who will be doing the long-term monitoring," Studebaker said. "Who will be studying the herring."

The Prince William Sound Science Center is one nonprofit she said will

likely continue research initiated by the oil spill settlement.

The EVOS Trustee Council was created in 1992 to manage the settlement of civil lawsuits filed against Exxon after the 1989 oil spill. The council has had access to a \$780 million budget for scientific research and habitat acquisition and preservation.

About \$24 million remains to be allocated to habitat acquisition and protection — a small fraction of the \$375 million already spent.

In preparation for Thursday's meeting, Elise Hsieh, EVOS Trustee Council executive director provided an update for habitat restoration in the Kodiak Archipelago via e-mail. Hsieh plans to be in Kodiak for the meeting, along with officials from NOAA.

She listed five properties the council is considering in the Kodiak Archipelago:

- Natives of Kodiak Portage Lake Parcel on Afognak.

The parcel is now for sale on the

private market. The State of Alaska and Natives of Kodiak remain willing to entertain discussion.

- Ouzinkie lands on Northern Afognak

The Ouzinkie Native Corporation nominated its lands for EVOS Trustee Council consideration. The trustee council authorized potential purchase partners to appraise the property. Potential purchase partners include conservation groups Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

- Leisnoi lands

Leisnoi Native Corporation nominated a conservation easement around the Olds and American Rivers and also some lakes on Kodiak Island. More work is needed to determine the lands being offered and the council's response.

- Sitkalidik Island Conservation Easement

Old Harbor Native Corporation offered a conservation easement on Sitkalidik Island. The parties are working on the terms of the easement.

23.01.12