

Forest Legacy Project

Northern Afognak Island

Kodiak, Alaska



FUNDING HISTORY

FY 2008 Forest Legacy Program Funding	\$1,113,000
FY 2008 Non-Federal Cost Share	\$1,887,894
FY 2008 Project Costs	\$3,000,894
FY 2008 Project Acres	1,996
Forest Legacy Funding To Date	\$1,113,000
Total Project Costs	\$3,000,894
Total Project Acres	1,996



Tract Name	Size (ac)	Tract Cost	FLP Funding	Non-Fed Cost Share	Status
Perenosa Bay Phase II - Waterfall, Delphin Bay	1,996	\$3,000,894	\$1,113,000	\$1,887,894	Completed 2009

★ Project Location
 ■ Forest Legacy Areas

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This 2-parcel acquisition project (Little Waterfall Lake and Delphin Cove) is a critical phase of a multi-partner effort to create a contiguous coastal rainforest along 150 miles of Afognak Island's habitat-rich coast. In 1992, biologists working for public natural resource agencies identified north Afognak, especially Perenosa Bay, as having high potential to benefit Exxon Valdez impacted natural resources, based on a 1,500-mile survey of oil spill impacted coastline. Adjacent to Perenosa Bay are 180,000 acres of conserved lands, including Phase I (4,400 acres) completed in 2005 in partnership with Amer Land Conservancy/Rocky Mt Elk Fdn/local Native entities. Perenosa Bay area has no habitat protection and is threatened to be subdivided. Among species that will benefit from completing conservation in Perenosa Bay are numerous species of birds, brown bear, elk, and marine mammals, including sea otters, harbor seals, sea lions, and 11 species of whales and porpoises.

PROJECT FEATURES

Important

- Afognak Island is home to Alaska's largest elk herd, with the wintering range of two elk herds (with more than 200 animals) benefiting from Perenosa Bay conservation.
- Kodiak brown bears utilize these parcels for salmon feeding and as a migration corridor between two other prime salmon feeding areas. Little Waterfall is highly utilized by bears with uplands used for hibernation.
- Marbled murrelet are identified as a threatened species in the southern edge of their range and under stress in Alaska. Forests in this proposal help comprise the world's best Marbled murrelet nesting habitat.
- Perenosa Bay timber stands provide globally outstanding nesting habitat for the marbled murrelet, a species of concern in the Pacific Northwest.
- Public ownership of these parcels will help connect adjacent public land on Afognak's north coast.
- Recreational and commercial uses benefit from an intact rainforest coastline. Beneficiaries include existing lodges, charter boats and the public who hunt, sport fish, sea kayak, and commercial fish

- (salmon and herring).
- Sea otters, harbor seals, spawning salmon, harlequin ducks, archaeological sites and public wilderness recreation are top species of concern and human benefits that will be enhanced by preventing coastal subdivision.
 - Seabird nesting in Perenosa Bay and north Afognak is especially successful within the Gulf of Alaska. Perenosa Bay also has the highest number of bald eagle nesting sites per coastal mile within the oil spill region.
 - Seasonal charter boats and cruise ships frequent the outlets of Portage River and Delphin Cove for their scenic beauty.
 - Several Alutiiq Eskimo sites are found at the outlet of Portage River, including year-round community housing pits that date as far back as 7,000 years.
 - The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill habitat protection process evaluated the resource values of parcels in Perenosa Bay and determined that they provided significant potential to benefit the resources and services injured by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill.
 - These parcels are important subsistence areas for hunting, fishing, and berry/planting gathering.
 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and State of Alaska wildlife mapping efforts have identified Perenosa Bay as a key Gulf of Alaska area for marine mammal conservation with limited and managed human activity along the coast as a priority.

Threatened

1. The property owners are Native for-profit corporations formed by the AK Native Claims Settlement Act. Both corporations are mandated by Congressional act to maximize shareholder profits, and they are currently considering subdivision options.
2. Plans exist for these parcels to be subdivided into 250 small parcels with extensive private cabins located in sensitive habitat and ideal public use areas. Water quality would decline while human disturbance would increase.
3. There is a high market appeal for private cabins on north Afognak Island. Equidistant from the cities of Homer and Kodiak, north Afognak is a 45 minute float plane ride from these cities.
4. Subdivision of Perenosa Bay will undermine major conservation investments in adjacent areas and threatens the water quality of the bay.
5. Forests threatened by subdivision for private recreational cabin development provide ideal salmon spawning area for the largest remaining unprotected salmon system on north Afognak.
6. Afognak is known Alaska-wide and in the lower 48 states as a prime coho salmon fishing destination for sport fishers annually. Coho salmon are the most sensitive to habitat alteration of the five species of Pacific salmon.
7. Salmon spawning systems similar to those protected in Prince William Sound and on Kodiak Island through Exxon Valdez Oil Spill habitat purchases are largely unprotected on Afognak Island.
8. Gulf of Alaska's sea otter population has recently been federally listed as threatened. Perenosa Bay is among the top breeding, feeding, and rearing habitats for sea otters in the Gulf of Alaska.
9. US Fish and Wildlife Service and State of Alaska wildlife mapping efforts have identified Perenosa Bay as the foremost Gulf of Alaska area for marine mammal conservation. Limited and managed human activity in the bay is a priority.

Strategic

- A combination of temperature, rainfall and topography creates conditions favorable for growing some of the most prodigious conifers anywhere on earth on Afognak Island.
- A mild sub-arctic climate and confluence of surface and upwelling currents in the Gulf of AK ensure a nutrient rich coastal habitat on N. Afognak. The island's irregular coast with many bays, jutting capes and headlands serves to trap and condense plankton and other nutrients for many foraging species of marine and land wildlife. The rich ecosystems adjacent to Perenosa Bay forests sustain long-established fisheries.

- A stakeholder-based Alaska Department of Fish and Game bear conservation plan supports conservation of all coastal areas on north Afognak.
- Afognak conservation became a national priority in 1892 with the creation of the Afognak Forest and Fish Culture Reserve by President Benjamin Harrison. The many near-shore rocks, islets and islands conserved within the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge in Perenosa Bay derive their conservation status from the 1892 executive order by President Harrison, done at the request of the U.S. Fish Commission led by Spencer Baird, one of America's foremost naturalists.
- Exxon Valdez habitat protection on adjacent lands plus ANILCA federal withdrawals for conservation purposes have created the opportunity for over 150 miles of publicly managed fish and wildlife areas. The highest and best use of this coastline is for maximum wildlife productivity that benefits such human uses as recreation, sustainable yield commercial fishing, subsistence and some timber harvesting.
- Financial resources from private non-governmental organizations plus non-Forest Legacy funds are participating in the Perenosa Bay project leveraging the remaining federally appropriated funds being sought by more than 10 to 1.
- In 1992 former Alaska Governor Walter J. Hickel asked the first Bush Administration to help create a state managed natural area that included all of the Perenosa Bay coastline.
- State and federal wildlife management goals will be more easily met with the successful completion of Perenosa Bay conservation with the subject parcels becoming part of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources holdings on north Afognak Island.
- Through state and federal wildlife agency collaboration, an historic, publicly endorsed, biologically driven habitat protection process identified Perenosa Bay conservation as critical to the success of other public investments of over \$120 million in habitat protection funds on adjacent lands. The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill restoration goals seek to protect breeding, nesting, feeding habitats for a suite of oil spill impacted fish and wildlife species and human resources in the Gulf of Alaska.

Readiness

- 4,000 acres immediately adjacent to these parcels have been purchased in 2005 by state, federal and private partners. Another 180,000 acres nearby are already conserved in publicly managed habitat areas.
- Appraisals have been recently completed for timber and land values.
- Both Native corporations are willing sellers and would prefer a buyer who will not diminish their subsistence use of the land by subdividing the parcels for private cabins.
- The carbon storage of the timber and ground based plant life has been measured by Winrock International using state of the art technology. Perenosa Bay, including this property, will likely become Alaska's first carbon sequestration project.

Supporting Parties

Alaska National Maritime National Wildlife Refuge; American Land Conservancy; Ducks Unlimited; Homer Chamber of Commerce; Kodiak Brown Bear Trust; Kodiak Chamber of Commerce; Kodiak Island Borough Assembly; Kodiak Island Convention and Visitors Bureau; Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge; Kodiak State Parks Citizens Advisory; National Rifle Association; Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation; The Pinchot Institute; Vital Ground Foundation; Wildlife Forever; and Wildlife Management Institute.

For more information on the Forest Legacy Program, please contact:

Scott Stewart

*National Forest Legacy
Program Coordinator*
USDA Forest Service
1400 Independence Avenue,
4SE
Washington, DC 20250
202-205-1618
sstewart@fs.fed.us

Brad Siemens

*Forest Legacy Program
Coordinator*
USDA Forest Service
161 East 1st Avenue, Door 8
Anchorage, AK 99501
503-808-2353
btsiemens@fs.fed.us

Steve Neel

Grants Administrator
Alaska Division of Forestry
550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1380
Anchorage, AK 99501-3561
907-269-8709
steve.neel@Alaska.gov



