

**Coastal Wetlands Grant - Nushagak Bay Watershed  
Conservation Phase 2**

**FY2006 Request: \$1,000,000  
Reference No: 39042**

**AP/AL:** Appropriation

**Project Type:** Planning

**Category:** Natural Resources

**Location:** Aleknagik

**Contact:** Gary Morrison

**House District:** Bristol Bay/Aleutians (HD 37)

**Contact Phone:** (907)269-8701

**Estimated Project Dates:** 07/01/2004 - 06/30/2005

**Brief Summary and Statement of Need:**

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation will acquire perpetual conservation easements on 7,000 acres along the Agulowak River within the Nushagak Bay Watershed, funded through the Coastal Wetlands grant program (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service). The Agulowak River is a major anadromous fish system. It provides spawning habitat and passage for nearly 2 million adult salmon, representing all five Pacific species.

<b>Funding:</b>	<b>FY2006</b>	<b>FY2007</b>	<b>FY2008</b>	<b>FY2009</b>	<b>FY2010</b>	<b>FY2011</b>	<b>Total</b>
Fed Rcpts	\$1,000,000						\$1,000,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> On-Going
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

**Operating & Maintenance Costs:**

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Additional Information / Prior Funding History:**

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has already determined that this will be one of the sixteen nationwide grants that they will fund.

**Project Description/Justification:**

The State of Alaska with its partners proposes to acquire a conservation easement on 7,000 acre of high value habitat dominated by palustrine wetlands in phase II of a 20,300 acre, three phase project. Aleknagik Natives Limited owns the property, which includes the entire length of the four mile long Agulowak River and extensive shoreline along Lake Aleknagik and Lake Nerka. It is the most strategic tract in the 1.6 million acre Wood-Tikchik State Park.

This acquisition in Wood-Tikchik State Park provides for: a) a 7,000 acre Conservation Easement, which is a "partial interest acquisition", which allow for continued public access and assurance that the current character of the area will be maintained; while protecting all the interests of the Native Corp. owner for limited future development and the continued customary use of the lands by the share holders, b) the lands will remain on the local tax roles, c) acquisition of the easement will not result in any additional management costs by the State, d) there is a willing seller (Native Corp.) that wants to sell to the State, e) there are no State funds to be used in the purchase costs f) the lands will continue to provide for and enhance economic development of the lodge/guide industry; as well as protection of world class commercial and sport fish spawning habitat in the Dillingham area, g) the sale will provide capitol to allow the Native Corp. to provide further economic development/business opportunities in the Dillingham area, h) does not involve use of any EVOS money, i) is the next phase of an ongoing acquisition program at Dillingham that has been previously approved, and j) this \$1,000,000 grant was approved by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and now requires authority from the Legislature to receive the funds.

The project area is highly valuable for fish and wildlife. The anadromous fishery is world class, providing spawning

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habitat to 200,000 sockeye salmon and passage for an additional 1.4 million sockeye as well as habitat for king, coho, chum and pink salmon. The project area is the most heavily used area in the Park for recreational activities and subsistence hunting and fishing.

The application proposes to acquire a conservation easement on 7,000 acres of high value habitat dominated by palustrine wetlands in phase II of a 22,000 acre, three phase project. This is the most strategic tract in the 1.6 million acre Wood-Tikchik State Park. The project area is highly valuable for fish and wildlife and the area is the most heavily used area in the Park for recreation and subsistence hunting and fishing. It involves multiple partners including: The Conservation Fund, Nushagak-Mulchatna/Wood-Tikchik Land Trust, Southwest Alaska Conservation Coalition, many private interests, and State Parks.

Alaska State Parks strongly supports and encourages the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's favorable consideration of the Nushagak Bay Watershed Conservation, Wood-Tikchik State Park, Alaska Phase II Project proposal.

**FY06 Coastal Wetlands**

Partners	Location	Federal Funding Requested	Match	Total cost of project
The Conservation Fund and Nushagak-Mulchatna Wood Tikchik Land Trust	Dillingham	\$1,000,000	\$454,500	\$204,336.00

**Why is this Project Needed Now:** The project involves multiple partners. It is part of a regional effort in Southwest Alaska to protect strategic habitats, predominately wetlands along the many large anadromous fish systems. The rich salmon runs are the foundation for the ecology, economy and social fabric of Southwest Alaska. The conservation easement will provide a model agreement and create significant interest among other Native landowners to enter into similar large-scale agreements. Partner contributions are high with a 117% increase over the required project match.

**Specific Spending Detail:** This project will fund the acquisition of perpetual conservation easements on 7,000 acres along the Agulowak River within the Nushagak Bay Watershed.

**Project Support:** The Conservation Fund, local land trusts, private landowners, fishermen, hunters, guides, other local tourism businesses, the Southwest Alaska Conservation Coalition, the Nushagak-Mulchatna Wood-Tikchik Land Trust, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.