

**Coastal Wetlands Grant - Nushagak Bay Watershed
Conservation Phase 1**

**FY2005 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:

In Ph I of this project (the FY'05 request), the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation will acquire, either by perpetual conservation easement or fee simple, 7,000 acres of wetland in-holdings within Wood-Tikchik State Park, including the four-mile long Agulowak River, associated uplands and approximately 12 miles of freshwater shorelines within the Nushagak Bay Watershed. The principal objective of this project is to protect a major anadromous fish system and perpetuate the fish, wildlife, habitat and public benefits they support within and outside the Park.

Funding:	<u>FY2005</u>	<u>FY2006</u>	<u>FY2007</u>	<u>FY2008</u>	<u>FY2009</u>	<u>FY2010</u>	<u>Total</u>
Fed Rcpts	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$900,000				\$2,900,000
Total:	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$900,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,900,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input 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	0
Totals:	0	0

Additional Information / Prior Funding History:

This is a new project request for this specific project.

\$553,000 from the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation grant program was secured in FY'03 and passed through to the City and Borough of Juneau for the acquisition of 148 acres of wetlands in the vicinity of the Herbert River. The acquisition was completed in June 2003 and the project was successfully closed in July 2003.

Project Description/Justification:

These lands, owned by Aleknagik Natives Limited (ANL), are a rich resource within Wood-Tikchik State Park. They comprise a strategic part of the internationally renowned Agulowak River. The Agulowak River is a major anadromous fish system, providing spawning habitat and passage for nearly two million adult salmon representing all five North American Pacific species, and rearing habitat for untold millions of juvenile salmon. The Wood River System, of which the Agulowak is a major contributor, produces sockeye salmon worth \$8-\$10 million annually to commercial fisherman on average. The Agulowak is a major contributor to the average 65,000 salmon harvested annually in the Nushagak River Drainage for subsistence. The river also supports large numbers of Dolly Varden, Arctic char, rainbow trout and grayling. The area provides approximately 5,000 angler days of recreation. Other private lands in the area are rapidly being developed. The ANL lands are highly desirable for development, which could have tremendous negative impact on fish, wildlife, subsistence, recreation, and other Park uses and values.

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This project also sustains subsistence and other traditional and historic uses of the property. Numerous archaeological sites are found in the project area because of the rich anadromous fish and wildlife resources that have existed here for thousands of year. Traditional uses are well established and are important to local residents, particularly Alaska Natives for their cultural perpetuation.

Anadromous fish are at the heart of Southwest Alaska, forming the basis of ecology, economy and culture. The future disposition and use of these lands will be major determinants of the sustainability of Southwest Alaska's fish and wildlife and the uses they support.

Why is this Project Needed Now:

Aleknagik Natives Limited needs to raise money for corporate, shareholder and community needs. The alternative to the sale of this property to the State is subdivision and development in this highly desirable, natural resource rich area. Possible impacts from development include wetlands loss and degradation, reduced water quality, habitat loss, displaced fish and wildlife, and reduced recreational opportunity. ANL is a willing seller: the State has secured this federal grant and match support from non-profit agencies sufficient to start this acquisition process. Therefore, now is the time to initiate this project.

Specific Spending Detail:

Approximately 12% of this project will pay for appraisals, title insurance, environmental assessment, and other preliminary documentation required by the federal grantor agency and the State of Alaska prior to acquisition. Approximately 88% will pay for the acquisition of approximately 7,000 acres via perpetual conservation easement or fee simple.

Project Support:

The Conservation Fund, The Land Trust, and Southwest Alaskan Conservation Coalition will provide either cash and/or in-kind to accomplish the project.

Project Opposition:

None known.

State Match Required:

Yes. Match will primarily be provided by non-profit organizations. No additional state funding is requested.

Annual Ongoing Operating and Maintenance Costs:

Existing State Park Ranger staff at Wood-Tikchik State Park will manage additional acreage.