

**Forest Legacy Federal Grant Program**

**FY2011 Request: \$1,000,000**

**Reference No: 34881**

**AP/AL:** Appropriation

**Project Type:** Parks / Recreation

**Category:** Natural Resources

**Location:** Mat-Su Areawide

**Contact:** Leta Simons

**House District:** Matsu Areawide (HD 13-16)

**Contact Phone:** (907)465-3379

**Estimated Project Dates:** 07/01/2010 - 06/30/2015

**Brief Summary and Statement of Need:**

The Forest Legacy Program provides federal funding for acquisition of high-value private forestland threatened with conversion to non-forest use. Legislative intent targets private lands adjacent to, or within, existing conservation units (parks, refuges, etc.) used primarily for forestry, fish and wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation and traditional access. These uses would be disrupted, destroyed or degraded if the private properties were converted to non-forest uses. To ensure that park visitors continue to enjoy quality outdoor recreation experiences, and interaction with Alaska's natural and cultural world, these invaluable state assets must be properly maintained to maximize the use of critical areas.

| <b>Funding:</b> | <u>FY2011</u> | <u>FY2012</u> | <u>FY2013</u> | <u>FY2014</u> | <u>FY2015</u> | <u>FY2016</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Fed Rcpts       | \$1,000,000   |               |               |               |               |               | \$1,000,000  |
| <b>Total:</b>   | \$1,000,000   | \$0           | \$0           | \$0           | \$0           | \$0           | \$1,000,000  |

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

**Additional Information / Prior Funding History:**

|               |              |                             |
|---------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| SLA2008/CH29  | \$ 2,516,500 | Active/ongoing 50% Expended |
| SLA2007/CH30  | \$ 50,000    | Complete                    |
| SLA2005/CH3   | \$ 630,000   | 92% Complete                |
| SLA2004/CH159 | \$ 4,500,000 | Complete                    |

**Project Description/Justification:**

The principal objective of this project is to acquire two forested inholdings totaling 307 acres within Denali State Park. The outcome will conserve forested habitats, natural features and uninterrupted views just below the proposed South Denali Visitor Center being jointly developed by Alaska State Parks and the National Park Service. These parcels are directly adjacent to the Denali View South Wayside located at Mile 135 Parks Highway and are highly visible from the proposed South Denali Visitor Center location, planned trails, access road and campground. State funds have been committed for an access road and development is moving forward.

The project area is located approximately two hours north of Anchorage in the Mat-Su Borough. It is anticipated that the visitor center will draw well over a quarter million visitors a year, potentially contributing an additional \$44 million to the area's economy. This area provides one of the closest road accessible views of Denali. Purchase of these two parcels will ensure that visitors experience the diversity of the tundra on Curry Ridge, the northern boreal forest in the valley, the riparian habitat of the Chulitna and uninterrupted views of the wilds of the Alaska Range, including Denali.

**Why is this Project Needed Now?**

The acquisition is timely. Development, which can severely influence wetlands, fish and wildlife populations, fragment forest habitat, interrupt viewsheds, and magnify user conflicts, has the potential to influence visitor experiences negatively at the proposed South Denali Visitor Center. The legislature previously appropriated funds for design and construction of and access road to the Visitor Center. The state has also received a \$1 million federal Scenic Byway grant for the project. Federal Forest Legacy funds have been competitively awarded and appropriated at the national level.

This project will prevent incompatible development on the forested properties and retain the character of the area for visitors to enjoy, allowing more visitors to experience the wonders of Denali and the Alaska Range. Viewing the continent's highest peak is one of the top reasons non-resident tourists visit Alaska. State and private tourism promotions routinely use images of Denali for marketing purposes. By providing a visitor an experience comparable and complementary to that available at Denali National Park and Preserve, the State can ensure that more visitors enjoy the type of experiences they are seeking when they come to Alaska. In addition, by providing a quality experience closer to Anchorage and Mat-Su the State will make it easier for tourists to enjoy a variety of Alaskan experiences during their vacations.

This project complements a previous capital appropriation by the legislature for the planning and development of the access road to the proposed South Denali Visitor Center. This project supports the goals and objectives of the Alaska Forest Legacy program as identified in the Assessment of Need and as recommended by the State's Forest Stewardship Committee.

**Specific Spending Detail:**

| <u>LINE ITEM</u>  | <u>DOLLAR AMOUNT</u> | <u>DESCRIPTION (text)</u>               |
|-------------------|----------------------|---|
| Personal Services | \$30,000             | Personnel costs for administering grant |
| Capital Outlay    | \$970,000            | Acquisition dollars                     |

**State Match Required:**

- NO
- YES

Non-federal match required. Match is being provided by partners.

**Project Support:**

- The Conservation Fund
- National Park Service
- Matanuska-Susitna Borough
- Friends of Mat-Su
- Friends of State Parks
- Mat-Su State Parks Citizens Advisory Board

**Project Opposition:**

None