

MEETING SUMMARY ALASKA PCJV PARTNERS MEETING 9-19-11 ANCHORAGE

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

II. USING ALASKA'S IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS FOR CONSERVATION

Presentation-Matt Kirchoff

Audubon is revising the IBA program, using more refined objectives and better data. Alaska is part of this, result will be better boundaries and information for conservation actions.

Examples:

- NPRA- overlaying lease tracts on Yellow-billed Loon data; aerial FWS surveys provide point locations and can get relative densities and better identify the population information needed for IB designations and boundaries. Applicable to conservation questions such as how leasing affects bird values.
- Spectacled Eider wintering concentration south of St. Lawrence Island, using data to support fishing restrictions.
- Identifying hot spots for Kittlitz's Murrelets around Kachemak Bay and potential ramifications of personal motorcraft uses.

Audubon AK also will be working on prioritization and on other conservation efforts such as mobilizing local groups to work on IBAs (such as citizen monitoring). Audubon AK has support from ADFG, Bullitt Foundation, PCJV and others to work on above items.

III. RECENT WORK BY DISCRETIONARY FUND PARTNERS

The Conservation Fund- Glenn Elison and Brad Meiklejohn

Glenn is working on several SW AK Projects- securing easements at outlet of Kukaklek Lake- this project somewhat on hold as LWCF line item of more than \$2 million no longer available. TCF also negotiating wetlands in-holdings in Lake Clark Park and Preserve— about 20,000 acres involving Kijik Corporation. In other areas, Brad has about 5 projects in SC Alaska: in Eklutna where PCJV funds helped with appraisal of lands held by Wells Fargo that Eklutna would like to acquire; upper Russian River in high value areas for fish; Kasilof where working with State and hosts rock sandpipers; and Middleton Island acquisition project.

Interior Alaska Land Trust (Sally Andersen)

IALT is an all volunteer organization and board, though [Chena Greenbelt Project](#) has two staff. Greenbelt progress continues with more than 500 acres secured. PCJV funds catalyzed a prioritization project that is looking at numerous parcels in the Greater Fairbanks area. IALT, with contractor USKH, considered a number of factors to rank lands to come up with

a conservation value. This project is still in the early stages. Other work with additional greenbelt and IALT parcels is in progress.

Great Land Trust – Phil Shephard

GLT continues Anchorage wetlands work but increasingly looking to opportunities in Mat-Su. In Anchorage, wetlands parcels greater than one acre (with some lands omitted such as parks) have been identified and mapped and landowner outreach conducted. The Mat-Su Borough below 1500 feet has been through a prioritization/ranking process (with exceptions related to ownership and parcel size). The Port of Anchorage mitigation fund provided \$8 million for intertidal habitat mitigation projects and this has been/will be used for highly ranked or otherwise appropriate projects in the Mat-Su. Recently GLT has worked on Campbell Creek, Islands at mouth of Knik, Goose Bay, O'Brien Creek, Spring Creek, the Nancy Moore Conservation Area, among others. GLT and State of AK received (and have applied for additional) National Coastal Wetlands Grant funds. GLT hopes to bring to a close several thousand wetlands acres soon, and on a smaller scale there is a lot of interest in potential projects in Talkeetna.

Alaskans for Palmer Hay Flats- Kris Abshire

APH distributed their new brochure, "[An Alaskan Jewel](#)" and talked about past and ongoing projects (such as Reflections Lake) and future priorities such as the Natural Science Center. APH is appreciative of the information presented at this type of meeting as they work with the "on the ground" component and they interface so much with the public and youth.

Some PCJV partners who could not attend provided updates about discretionary fund projects:

- [Nushagak-Mulchatna Wood-Tikchik Land Trust--SW Alaska Assessment](#)
- [Survey of Wintering Sea Ducks and Waterbirds in Bristol Bay, Alaska](#)
- [Mapping Critical Alaska Stopover Habitat for Shorebird Species Associated with Rocky Shorelines](#)
- [First Annual Yakutat Tern Festival](#)
- [Copper River Delta Science Symposium](#)

III. AGENCY AND PCJV UPDATES

PCJV- Carey Smith

See handouts for lists of National Coastal Wetlands grants and NAWCA grants. Are about \$8 million in coastal grants and \$3 million in NAWCA in PCJV area. See PCJV web pages for more information on grant projects, including information on developing NAWCA proposals. NAWCA has been zeroed out twice in the house, expects \$20-30 million in conference. Other grants- PCJV Discretionary Funds have been supporting appraisals, capacity building and planning. Changes in PCJV grants might include a later RFP so not such a long delay between

solicitation and funding. PCJV Management Board coming up September 21st, with agenda items to include: planning, LCC and JV coordination, discretionary funds and other items.

ADFG-David Tessler, Dan Rosenberg, Joe Meehan

Wildlife Diversity Program has been funded for more than 9 years, with about \$1-2 million annually to go to partner work that focuses on elements within what now called the State Wildlife Action Plan. This funding has already been cut by a third, and may a 60-80% cut coming nationally. In AK program will be on vacation at least for the short term, but there still may yet be funding for specific things so interested partners should contact Mary or Dave. Dave also has an interest in looking at re-invigorating Teaming with Wildlife. Refuges working hard to keep up refuge access and infrastructure for public use and habitat protection.

USFWS- Habitat Partnerships and Coastal Program- John DeLapp and David Wigglesworth

John is Habitat Partnerships Coordinator FWS regional office and David with FWS Coastal Program, both involved with partner projects, grants and helping in various ways with capacity building for land conservation partners. Work with National Coastal Wetlands grants, NAWCA and others and John is NFWF liaison. FWS also has other programs such as Partners and Fish Passage that can assist partners with restoration and other conservation projects. The Coastal Program can focus on protection projects and works with land trusts. Examples of recent work include work with American Land Conservancy, land-owner outreach, and an effort with land trusts in Mat-Su to study and present economic case for conservation in the Mat-Su Valley.

USFWS, Landscape Conservation Cooperatives- Karen Murphy and Doug Burn

Karen spoke to the Western Alaska LCC and LCCs in general. LCCs are looking at core science information, with a climate change lens. And they look to provide science to serve land and resource management. Western AK now doing a short and long term strategic plan and science plan. Handout included [2011 Western Alaska LCC Collaborator Projects](#). Karen would like to see suggestions on project activities. The Aleutian Islands and Bering Sea LCC is just getting underway and has their first steering committee meeting coming up.

USFS, Chugach National Forest- Tim Joyce

USFS has Forest Legacy funds for natural areas in state but money will be decreased next year. [The State of Alaska must apply for the Forest Legacy funds](#). An upcoming FS and partner project is “Wetlands Live” which follows the very successful “Migration and Mystery” shorebird program a few years ago. Chugach NF has also been involved with scientist and intern exchanges related to wetlands conservation, and has worked with Point Reyes Bird Observatory on shorebird research. An exciting international exchange of biologists has occurred for the last two seasons; the first was with Columbia, the second was with Mexico. This exchange has been a partnership with the Copper River Migratory Bird Initiative, Pronatura Mexico and the Cordova Ranger District. This exchange provides an opportunity for the visiting biologist to

learn some of our monitoring techniques and also involve the Latin American segment of our local population in many of our outreach programs. The first scientist, Carlos Ruiz, from Calidris in Columbia, subsequently found the first recorded Collard Plover nest in Columbia. We hope to continue this program in the future and are looking for additional partners.

EPA- Matt LaCroix

Matt referred to handouts [EPA Region 10 Focus Areas and Program Responsibilities](#) and [Notes for September 2011](#) that provided information on priorities and programmatic structure of EPA in AK. Main nexus with PCJV is within wetlands program. EPA is trying to be very strategic as they are losing funding like everyone else. Four priorities at this time: enforcement, jurisdiction (with the Corps), grants, and mitigation. Within grants, wetland program development grants a priority. Project review also a key EPA function, and reviews fall within mining, oil and gas, hydropower and transportation. An assessment in progress in mining sector, and hydropower will be important as Susitna hydropower gets underway. See handout for information on State and Tribal programs and other programs/activities. A national wetlands assessment is looking at wetlands conditions across the country and EPA and DEC in AK part of that.

IV. OTHER “Around the Room” UPDATES AND INFORMATION

Institute for Seabird Research and Conservation- Scott Hatch

The Institute for Seabird Research and Conservation has been formed to procure funding and protect the facilities at a privately owned site on Middleton Island in the Gulf of Alaska (see [Reclaiming Middleton Island One Nest at a Time.](#)) ISRC has an option to purchase this fall. With the help of The Conservation Fund, Audubon Alaska and others ISRC has already made significant progress towards the purchase price. The Institute currently has a NFWF grant proposal under consideration. Phase I of this project is acquisition, with phases II and III working on restoration and long term sustainability for the project--so research and education can continue. EPA has done a site assessment (not a superfund site) and DOD has also been working on site assessment.

Matanuska-Susitna Borough- Frankie Barker

Relevant wetlands activities include the West Coast Estuary Initiative with EPA, which is helping fund stormwater management, low-impact development and further development of the Borough’s Green Infrastructure program. The Borough is also continuing work with wetlands mapping and functional assessments, see: <http://www.matsugov.us/planning/projects-plans/195-participate-in-your-community>. A new development is the recently completed draft of the [Wetlands Management Plan](#). Comments are due by November 18th on the draft plan. A handout on Rain Gardens was provided as one example of work done low impact development and conservation. MSB is part of the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership and partnership/science meetings are coming up in November with all welcome.

Office of Senator Begich- Mary Kvalheim

Mary expressed appreciation for hearing about the various activities going on with conservation, and would like to be informed of partner activities in the future. Her email: mary_kvalheim@begich.senate.gov Mary also mentioned that the grants workshop that was held last year will be offered again this fall and you can contact her to learn more. (And it will be posted on the PCJV news.)

IV. CLOSING COMMENTS AND MEETING ADJOURN

Due to time, future meetings were not discussed but meetings will be posted on the PCJV AK page.

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