

**ARCHERY TRADE ASSOCIATION, BEAR TRUST INTERNATIONAL, BOONE & CROCKETT CLUB  
CALIFORNIA WATERFOWL, CAMP FIRE CLUB OF AMERICA, CONGRESSIONAL SPORTSMEN'S  
FOUNDATION, CONSERVATION FORCE, DALLAS SAFARI CLUB, DELTA WATERFOWL  
FOUNDATION, DUCKS UNLIMITED, HOUSTON SAFARI CLUB, IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF  
AMERICA, MASTERS OF FOXHOUNDS ASSOCIATION, MISSISSIPPI RIVER TRUST, NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION OF FOREST SERVICE RETIREES, NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS FOUNDATION  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION, NORTH AMERICAN GROUSE PARTNERSHIP, ORION – THE  
HUNTER'S INSTITUTE, POPE AND YOUNG CLUB, PROFESSIONAL OUTFITTERS AND GUIDES OF  
AMERICA, PUBLIC LANDS FOUNDATION, QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION, SAFARI  
CLUB INTERNATIONAL, SPORTSMEN'S ALLIANCE, THEODORE ROOSEVELT CONSERVATION  
PARTNERSHIP, WILDLIFE FOREVER, WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE,  
WILDLIFE MISSISSIPPI**

February 24, 2020

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Re: Bering/Martin River Inholding Acquisition in Copper River Delta, Chugach National Forest

Dear Members of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council,

Many of the American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP) have supported the work of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council toward comprehensive oil spill restoration since

the 1990s and strongly support the unique achievements of the Council in habitat conservation and scientific research.

In 2010, twenty-six members of the AWCP commented in support of the Trustee Council's preferred alternative in the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill (EVOS) Trustee Council's Restoration Plan stating: "The approximately 650,000 acres of fish and wildlife habitat the Council has conserved through the purchase of various property rights from willing sellers provides the American people with a lasting legacy as compensation from the tragic 1989 oil spill."

In 2016, twenty-six members of the AWCP signed a letter to the EVOS Trustee Council recommending the consideration of the 11,000 acre South Korean owned private inholding owned by the Korea Alaska Development Corporation in the Copper River-Bering River-Martin River watersheds for a possible conservation acquisition using a modest part of the remaining habitat funds in the EVOS restoration account.

The 2016 AWCP letter stated: "We are writing on behalf of the millions of hunter and angler conservationists we represent to strongly request that the Trustee Council direct the Great Land Trust to evaluate the merits and link-to-injury of conserving the fish and wildlife, their habitats, coal, timber and other natural resources on a 73,000 acre private land inholding located within the Copper River Watershed and contiguous to the Chugach National Forest and the Bering Glacier Research Natural Area in Alaska." (note: 62,000 acres of this area have been conserved by the landowner, Chugach Alaska Corporation, using private funding in a carbon transaction leaving only the remaining 11,000-acre Korean inholding to be conserved to help ensure that the fish and wildlife and their habitats in this area and the thousands of livelihoods that are dependent upon those resources are protected and conserved.)

Signatories of this 2020 letter strongly support the Trustee Council's willingness to consider and negotiate a purchase offer with the Korea Alaska Development Corporation for their Bering River inholding in the Chugach National Forest's Copper River Delta region.

This AWCP sign-on letter endorses the U.S Forest Service's current management plan for the Copper River Delta, noting these USFS findings:

"The Copper River Delta is the most eastern geographic area, covering 1.6 million acres of the Chugach National Forest. The most dominant feature of this area is the delta wetland, which is one of the largest in the world and is part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve...Ninety-three percent of this area was designated by ANILCA to be managed primarily for the conservation of fish and wildlife.

"The Copper River Delta complex is one of the largest wetlands in the world has been designated as a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network Site of Hemispheric Importance – the highest designation awarded to shorebird habitat. The Copper River Delta is an important socio-economic resource and the largest of three Key Coastal

Wetlands of the Alaska Region. It has a crucial role in the survival of coastal migrant waterbirds using the West Hemisphere Pacific Flyway.

“Hydrological functions of the Copper River Delta complex are ecologically significant and socio-economically important, sustaining valuable habitats for fisheries and other aquatic resources. Nutrients carried down the Copper River Delta complex are important to the Gulf of Alaska marine ecosystem... The Copper River wetland provides critical nesting habitat for dusky Canada geese and is one of the largest staging areas in the world for migratory shorebirds. Other species of public and management interest that occur in this area are brown bear, black bear, gray wolf, and bald eagles. Salmon, along with Dolly Varden char, cutthroat trout, and eulachon, are abundant in the waters of the Copper River Delta. Major runs of sockeye and Chinook salmon pass through the lower Copper River on their migration to spawn in the upper tributaries of the Copper River. Subsistence, recreational, and commercial fishing provide an important source of food and economic benefit to the local community.”

In closing, we agree with the U.S. Forest Service’s management plan for the Copper River Delta and strongly encourage the EVOS Trustee Council to pursue acquiring, retiring and conserving the Korea Alaska Development Corporation inholding through obligating some portion of the remaining habitat conservation account for that mission. Such an outcome would provide direct and lasting benefit to the way of life, subsistence, commercial fishing, tourism, hunting, sport fishing and other outdoor recreational activities and industries already long established in the region.

Thank you for the Trustee Council’s decades of achievement in Exxon Valdez habitat restoration actions and for your thoughtful and visionary consideration of this recommendation.

Sincerely,

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CAMP FIRE CLUB OF AMERICA  
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