

3/30/10

Dear Exxon Valdez Council,

For the last two decades I have had the privilege of spending a great deal of time in the wonderful state of Alaska. I feel in love with Alaska on my honeymoon some 20 years ago—I gave up counting over the years after my 50th visit to Kodiak.

In my mind, Alaska is truly the last frontier and paradise left in the USA. Sharing this special place with my family and friends over those years has given me a great deal of pride and enjoyment. I started the web site www.kodiakbears.com many years ago for all the people around the world that do not have the ability or means to visit Alaska. Many write to tell me they dream one day of visiting Alaska. The long flight to Alaska, which I take many times a year from the east coast, allows me to meet retired individuals as well as others. Many tell me that they saved their entire life to be able to make this one trip to Alaska. That is a very powerful statement—it speaks volumes to what we are talking about when it comes to conservation and protecting lands for future generations to enjoy, like we are able to enjoy today.

I would kindly urge you all to work hard to find the funds to protect the lower Karluk River, Sitkalidak Island and northern Afognak areas of Kodiak Island. They are truly very special places in the state that deserve a serious look to protect and cherish-- not only for the abundance of wildlife that these spots contain, but also for the public to enjoy. I believe it is important to contain growth so that lodges do not pop up on any open land in these "diamond" spots of Kodiak Island. Today you can play a big role to stop that from happening. In my experience when lands are developed the wildlife and public are hurt the most. I understand this is indeed a fine balance thus the reason I am only talking about a few specific areas in this note to you. Your restoration plan will make the difference so that future generations can share this great wild state of Alaska like all of us are able to today. You can play a role to make this a reality. I think of all those future retired people 40 years from now saying the same thing I hear others say today, " I saved my entire life to take this trip to Alaska ... to see land untouched by humans ... true wildlife, not imprisoned by zoo cages." A person's ability to see land untouched by humans in the USA today is very limited-- thank you for your role in protecting the lower Karluk River, Sitkalidak Island and northern Afognak areas of Kodiak Island.

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