# Kenai Peninsula Small Parcels

*Overview*

Small parcel acquisitions on the Kenai Peninsula have largely focused on the Kenai River Watershed, the Anchor River, the Ninilchik River and the Homer Spit. The Small Parcel Program has provided the Trustee Council with a unique opportunity to address local needs and concerns by securing small parcels that provide additional recreational and sport fish access and address specific community needs in addition to providing important restoration values for injured resources and services.

The Tulin, Coal Creek, Overlook, Beluga Slough, and Green Timbers parcels are located along the shoreline of Cook Inlet and contributed to the restoration of sockeye salmon, pink salmon, harbor seals, intertidal and subtidal resources and recreation.

The Morris, Icicle Seafoods, and Swartz parcels are located along the Ninilchik River and contributed to the restoration of species dependent upon riparian habitat such as sockeye salmon, pink salmon, harlequin ducks, and services such as recreation and sport fishing.

Along the Anchor River small parcel acquisitions include Eliot, Crowther, Knol, Nakada, and Thompson which have contributed to the protection of riparian habitat which in turn contributes to the restoration of sockeye salmon, pink salmon, Dolly Varden, harlequin ducks and recreation and sport fishing access.

*The Kenai River Small Parcels*

The Council also has pursued acquisition of strategic parcels nominated by willing sellers along the Kenai River. The Kenai River is an increasingly popular recreational destination for tourists, sport fishers, boaters and others. These diverse uses threaten to degrade fish spawning and rearing habitat on the Kenai River. In addition, development of these parcels threatens important wetland habitat that serves as a filtering system for upland runoff and an important source of nutrients and materials essential to the welfare of the Kenai's fishery resources. Pink salmon and Dolly Varden spawn along the banks of the Kenai. The many sloughs and wetlands provide rearing and overwintering habitat for Dolly Varden, chinook, and coho salmon. Sockeye salmon also migrate and rear along the banks of the Kenai. Recreation use on the Kenai is high and very much dependent upon the health of the fisheries resources injured by the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, particularly sockeye salmon and Dolly Varden.

Kenai River Acquisitions include Salamatof, Kenai Natives Association package, Cone, River Ranch, Girves, Patson, Schilling, Mansholt, and Kobylarz parcels. These parcels have particular value to the restoration of injured resources and services because of their riparian habitat and access opportunities for recreation and sport fishing. These parcels have contributed to the restoration of sockeye salmon, Dolly Varden, pink salmon, bald eagles, river otters, intertidal and subtidal resources, cultural resources, wilderness, and recreation.

*Example of Benefits pursued by the Council with Kenai River Parcels:*

- protects and reestablishes riparian habitat and wetlands
- recreational use depends on fisheries resources that were injured in the spill, particularly sockeye salmon and Dolly Varden
- protects river frontage habitat as Dolly Varden and Sockeye salmon migrate and rear along the banks of the river
- streamside vegetation along the river stabilizes riverbanks, protects water quality, moderates temperatures and provides cover for fish
- high-valued tidal marsh supports intertidal and subtidal resources
- extensive wetlands maintain water quality and flood control

*Descriptions of Parcels Purchased & Injured Species Benefits*

Kobylarz – ADNR/ADFG

The Kobylarz parcel has approximately 1100 feet of river frontage on Big Eddy at mile 14 of the Kenai River, one of the most popular fishing areas on the river. Pink salmon and Dolly Varden spawn in the river adjacent to the parcel and sockeye salmon migrate and rear along the banks of the river. A slough on the parcel provides excellent rearing and overwintering habitat for Dolly Varden, chinook and coho salmon.

Acquisition of this parcel addressed an ongoing trespass use by fishermen attempting to gain access to Big Eddy. Recreational use of the Kenai River depends on fisheries resources that were injured in the spill, particularly sockeye salmon and Dolly Varden. The parcel receives a high level of use.

Mansholt – ADNR/ADFG

The Mansholt parcel has approximately 100 feet of river frontage and is strategically located adjacent to the Kobylarz parcel in the Big Eddy area of the river. The property supports a spring fed slough and riparian wetlands providing rearing habitat for coho and chinook salmon. Pink salmon and Dolly Varden spawn in the river adjacent to the property and the parcel provides overwintering habitat for Dolly Varden. The property provides pedestrian access to the Big Eddy fishing hole.

Cone - ADNR/ADFG

The Cone parcel located near the mouth of the Kenai River has an extensive high valued tidal marsh supporting intertidal/subtidal resources. Tidal marshes of this parcel are considered unique in this evaluation because of their limited distribution and high productivity. Estuarine wetlands such as those on the subject property are used by salmon smolt for cover and feeding

prior to their outmigration. Hundreds of thousands of waterfowl, shorebirds, and raptors use this area for feeding, nesting, and staging.

Girves - ADNR/ADFG

The Girves parcel is located near mile 19 of the Kenai River just outside the city of Soldotna and experiences high levels of trespass use resulting in erosion of the riverbank. Acquisition of this parcel has allowed active management of access to protect and reestablish riparian habitat. The parcel provides key habitat for Chinook salmon, Coho salmon, pink salmon and Dolly Varden.

Salamatof – USFWS (three parcels)

The Salamatof parcel encompasses approximately two miles of river bank between River Miles 26 and 28, upriver from the Soldotna Airport. The parcel is composed of uplands and riparian wetlands. Pink Salmon and Dolly Varden spawning and rearing habitat occur adjacent to the property. There are two documented bald eagle nests. Key river otter habitat is also found on this parcel, including denning areas and concentrated latrine sites. Bank fishing impacts are prevalent. Sockeye salmon migrate and rear along the banks of the Kenai River. They may also spawn along the river however site-specific use has not been documented.

Roberts/Shilling – ADNR/ADFG

The Roberts/Shilling parcel is located on the Kenai River adjacent to the Kenai Peninsula Visitors Center in Soldotna. It has approximately 644 feet of river frontage and experiences high levels of sportfishing use. Acquisition of this parcel allowed for the development of elevated grate walks designed to manage sportfishing and recreational access and reestablish and protect riparian habitat. Pink salmon and Dolly Varden spawn and rear in this stretch of the river. The streamside vegetation afforded by this and other parcels along the river stabilizes riverbanks, protect water quality, moderate temperatures and provide cover for fish.

Patson - ADNR/ADFG

The Patson parcel is located at mile 24.5 just outside the City of Soldotna. The parcel contains approximately 1,500 linear feet of river frontage. Acquisition of this parcel close to the City of Soldotna provided an opportunity to protect riparian habitat and provide managed access as appropriate close to town such as overhanging grassy banks for fish rearing, extensive wetlands for maintaining water quality, flood control, forested uplands.

River Ranch - ADNR/ADFG

The River Ranch parcel is located near Mile 32 of the river and provides access to the river from Funny River Road on the southern side of the river. It was developed primarily as a horse and cattle ranch and removal of livestock has allowed riparian vegetation to reestablish and provide additional fish habitat.

Kenai Natives Association (Stephanka/Moose River) - USFWS

The Kenai Natives Association package contains habitat important to bald eagles for feeding during the fall and winter as they congregate in this area to feed on the late silver salmon run. This parcel also contains significant archaeological resources including the Stephanka Village site. This package and the surrounding Kenai National Wildlife Refuge lands possess high value wilderness characteristics.

| **Parcel ID** | **Description** | **Acres** | **Value** | **Manager** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| KEN 5 | Salamatof | 1,377.0 | $2,540,000 | USFWS |
| KEN 1002/03/04 | KNA Package | 3,254.0 | $4,000,000 | USFWS |
| KEN 1051 | Salamatof Parcels | 14.5 | $149,500 | USFWS |
| KEN 1052 | Salamatof Parcels | 6.6 | $33,500 | USFWS |
| KEN 10 | Kobylarz | 20.0 | $320,000 | ADNR/ADFG |
| KEN 34 | Cone | 100.0 | $600,000 | ADNR/ADFG |
| KEN 148 | River Ranch | 146.0 | $1,650,000 | ADNR/ADFG |
| KEN 1006 | Girves | 110.0 | $1,835,000 | ADNR/ADFG |
| KEN 1034 | Patson, Parcel | 76.3 | $450,000 | ADNR/ADFG |
| KEN 1038 | Schilling/Roberts | 3.3 | $698,000 | ADNR/ADFG |
| KEN 1049 | Mansholt | 1.6 | $55,000 | ADNR/ADFG |
| **Kenai River** | **Total:** | **5,109.3** | **$12,331,000** | |