Torsen Parcel, Shasta Creek, Kodiak

Owner:	Ernest Torsen
Physical Location:	This parcel is located on Shasta Creek, a tributary of the Karluk River, Kodiak Island, Alaska.
Acreage:	87.99 acres
Brief Description:	Native Allotment on Shasta Creek
Agency Sponsor:	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Appraised Value:	

Parcel Description. This parcel, aka Lot 1, U.S. Survey 13916, is a Native allotment comprising 87.99 acres granted to Mr. Torsen by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). It is located on Shasta Creek a tributary to the Karluk River on Kodiak Island, Alaska. The parcel is located in Section 28, T. 30 S., R. 31 W. of the Seward Meridian. It is bounded by BLM lands to the east, west and south and Koniag lands to the north. Originally this parcel was BLM land. Lands were conveyed to Mr. Torsen under provisions of the Alaska Native Veterans Allotment Act. The parcel is in a natural condition at this time. The parcel is composed of a low tundra mountain which slopes into Shasta Creek.

The Torsen Native allotment was nominated under the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council (Council) Small Parcel program in July of 2011 and has been under consideration by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) for several years. This nomination was deferred from Council consideration until approximately 2,082 acres of federal lands managed by the BLM that surround the allotment could be incorporated into the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge), consolidating land ownership. The BLM has recently concurred with the Service's proposal, pursuant to Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act Section 103(b), to make a minor adjustment to the Refuge boundary that formally incorporates these lands in to the Refuge. Acquisition of the Torsen Native allotment would complete the consolidation of these lands under a single management regime to facilitate the preservation and effective management of water quality, fish and wildlife habitats in this area.

Linkage to Restoration:

Restoration Benefits.

Shasta Creek is a main tributary of the Karluk River, Kodiak's largest river. The Karluk River supports one of only two freshwater king fisheries on Kodiak Island. The king fishery has seriously declined over the past 20 years to the point that sport fish opportunities, once a significant activity on the river, are almost non-existent. The reasons for the decline of the run have not been identified and maybe a result of several factors including bycatch from off shore fisheries, ocean warming and lack of primary food sources. King salmon on Kodiak Island rely on Pacific Herring as a primary food source. Pacific Herring are also known to spawn in the nearshore waters of the Karluk

River Lagoon. The 2010 Injured Resources & Services Update (adopted in May 2010) by the Council lists Pacific Herring as "not recovered". The Karluk drainage is also known to provide critical winter feeding habitat for pigeon guillemots, a species also listed as "not recovered" in the 2010 Injured Resources & Services Update. Acquisition of the Torsen parcel would help support recovery of these injured resources. Shasta Creek is also used by resident Dolly Varden.

The area also supports recreational use by kayakers, nature viewers, fishers, birdwatchers and hikers, particularly those floating down the Karluk River, which Shasta Creek flows into. Shasta Creek is one of the designated campsites on the Karluk River downstream of the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge. So anyone floating the Karluk River and staying at the campsite would likely notice development on the Torsen parcel.

Potential Threats.
Under private ownership, uses that would be incompatible with Kodiak Refuge management are allowable. Such uses include subdivision, development, limited timber cutting, and denial of public use and access. These uses would change the character of the land and would adversely affect natural resources and visitor experiences.

Proposed Management.
Upon acquisition, this parcel will be managed by the Kodiak Refuge consistent with applicable federal laws and policy.

Request.
Torsen Funding and Conditional-Purchase Authorization Request: The Service requests due diligence (appraisal, appraisal review, environmental reviews, and title work) funding in the amount of $7,600. In addition, the Service requests that the Council conditionally authorize the purchase of this parcel:

a. if the estimated fair market value falls within the bracketed value of $60,000 - $100,000; and
b. due diligence reports are acceptable to ADNR and ADOL; and
c. provided that the Council Executive Director, ADNR and ADOL find that it is in best interest of the Council to move forward with acquisition of the parcel.

The authorization would be valid for a two-year period.