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SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA

Working with willing landowners and other partners to conserve Southcentral Alaska's lands and waterways.

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Great Land Trust EVOS Funding Proposal
December 13, 2012

Abstract:

Great Land Trust, a regional land trust based in Anchorage, Alaska, requests funding from the EVOS Habitat Acquisition Fund in order to develop up to 5 conservation projects in the Kodiak archipelago. Great Land Trust (GLT) would carry out this work over a two year period beginning in 2013 by utilizing a recently drafted land conservation prioritization, completed via a grant from the USFWS Coastal Program. GLT would contact landowners of the highest ranking parcels and based on landowner interest, complete due diligence including appraisals and environmental hazard review for multiple projects. GLT would work closely with EVOS Trustee Council staff, DNR staff and USFWS staff in order to complete this project. GLT would actively seek significant grant funding from other sources to compliment EVOS funding to carry out the top projects. Of the projects developed, we envision completion of at least 2-3 large scale conservation projects with landowners on Kodiak during the grant period.

Great Land Trust Background:

Great Land Trust is Southcentral Alaska's regional land trust. It is an independent nonprofit land conservation organization founded by and for Alaskans in 1995. Our service area includes more than 50 percent of Alaska's total population and ranges from the Alaska Range in the North to Prince William Sound and Kodiak to the south. Great Land Trust is the only Alaska based land trust working in Kodiak and is in an excellent position to work there because of our board expertise. The other adjacent land trusts and national conservation organizations in Alaska were consulted prior to GLT's expansion to Kodiak and felt GLT was in the best position to work in this important area. Great Land Trust works in partnership with willing private and public landowners to permanently conserve special lands, signature landscapes, and waters essential to the quality of life and economic health of communities in the region. We seek to protect the integrity of the natural ecosystems, wetlands and streams, access to recreational lands, and conserve lands important for towns and cities.

Great Land Trust, an accredited land trust, has extensive experience with wildlife habitat and wetland conservation projects. Since 1995, GLT has completed 27 land conservation projects totaling nearly 8500 acres in southcentral Alaska, including over 40 miles of salmon streams. GLT has professional staff skilled at carrying out complex land transactions. GLT has been nationally recognized for wetland conservation successes including (LTA Living Lands Publication, Coastal America 2007 Partnership Award, US DOI Cooperative Conservation Award 2008) and was awarded the Outstanding Partner Award by the Region 7 Director of USFWS for 2011. In addition, GLT recently became the first land trust in Alaska and one of only 181 nationwide to achieve accreditation with the Land Trust Alliance Accreditation Commission.

As part of the Accreditation process Great Land Trust has outside annual third party audits. GLT's annual financial audit and IRS form 990 are available for viewing on the GLT website: http://www.greatlandtrust.org/whoweare/financial.html

Great Land Trust has completed significant projects with a wide range of partners, including the Municipality of Anchorage, the Mat-Su Borough, State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources and State Parks, USFWS, Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA, Alaska Native Corporations, Ducks Unlimited, Pacific Coast Joint Venture and numerous private businesses and landowners. GLT has experience with raising and managing significant public and private funding, having completed nearly $14 million in conservation projects over the last 24 months. Significantly, GLT has extensive experience with mitigation funding, having operated an In-lieu Fee program under an MOU with the Army Corps of Engineers since 1998. As part of this program, GLT has received hundreds of payments totaling over $12 million and completed 9 conservation projects. Two recent projects are described below.

The Campbell Creek Estuary Conservation Project:
Great Land Trust succeeded in raising $7.5 million dollars to purchase and conserve Campbell Creek Estuary, the last undeveloped estuary of the original seven salmon streams in Anchorage. Great Land Trust worked with the Municipality of Anchorage and many other partners for three years to raise funds to purchase the 60 acre parcel and donate it to the Municipality as a new Natural Area. Great Land Trust retained a conservation easement. The Project conserved ½ mile of Campbell Creek's lower reaches including the Estuary and its critical tidal marsh habitat as well as 25 acres of coastal forest. This parcel also provides access to the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge. Project funding included dollars to clean up the property, develop a park plan, create a modest trailhead and gravel trails, as well as monitor and address the conservation needs of the property annually.

Knik Islands Conservation Project:
The Knik Islands Conservation Project was completed in the fall of 2011 as a partnership between Great Land Trust and Eklutna, Inc. The project permanently conserves nearly 4800 acres at the mouth of the Knik and Matanuska Rivers with a conservation easement. This land will remain under the ownership of Eklutna, Inc. and traditional uses such as hunting and fishing by Shareholders, and public access through permits, will continue. This property contains excellent habitat for all five species of salmon in Cook Inlet as well as many other wildlife species. In addition, the property provides a wildlife and recreational corridor between Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge and Chugach State Park. Scenic views of the property are well known by travelers crossing the Knik River Bridge on the Glenn Highway. This project was made possible through a collaborative effort with the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership, US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA Fisheries, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and CIRI. Funding for this conservation easement was made possible through resources set aside to offset habitat losses associated with the expansion of the Port of Anchorage.

Key staff members of Great Land Trust are described below:

Phil Shephard, Executive Director**:** Phil is responsible for general program direction, board relations, partnership development, fundraising, and financial management for GLT. He will be responsible for the overall implementation of the grant and assuring that all goals are met. He has been executive director for over 4 years and has 23 years of experience working in the non-profit conservation world, and has a degree in Geology from Whitman College in Walla Walla, WA. Most recently, he worked for 17 years for the Nature Conservancy managing programs in Northeast

Oregon and Northcentral Wyoming. He was born and raised in Alaska and is raising his family here.

David Mitchell, MESc, Conservation Director: Dave is responsible for directing land acquisitions and conservation easements including due diligence, stewardship planning and monitoring. He directs our wetland mitigation work and has extensive experience working with agencies and developers to find solutions that benefit all parties. Dave has been our Conservation Director since 2005. He graduated with a BA in geography from the University of Colorado and received his Masters in Environmental Science from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies where he focused on land management and conservation.

Process:

Great Land Trust proposes to carry out conservation projects on Kodiak and Afognak through a multi-step process:

1. Project Identification

GLT will use a recently completed conservation prioritization for the entire archipelago to identify habitat with the highest conservation value. This prioritization, funded by the USFWS Coastal Program, incorporates the latest information on land ownership, including all projects previously completed with EVOS funding. All unprotected private lands, in addition to State lands owned by Mental Health Trust are ranked for their conservation value. The prioritization includes current bird distribution data for all special status species as well as subwatershed rankings for anadromous fish diversity throughout the archipelago. Details of the criteria used are included in appendix. GLT will obtain feedback on the prioritization from EVOS Trustees, staff, USFWS, ADFG, landowners, as well as Kodiak Island Borough officials.

2. Landowner Contact

GLT will then contact the landowners of high ranking parcels to determine their willingness to sell fee simple or a conservation easement. This will also include discussions with the landowners regarding acreage and parcel configuration, timelines and due diligence. Great Land Trust will meet frequently with agency and EVOS staff during this phase of the project to get feedback on the projects that seem to have the most promise.

3. Appraisal

GLT will contract a phased appraisal of the highest ranking parcels with willing landowners, based on the meetings from step two. The first phase of the appraisal will include a meeting with the appraiser after research has been conducted by the appraiser. The appraiser will report the expected high and low range of values for the value of the property. A full appraisal will be completed only if the initial range of values is acceptable to both the buyer and the seller.

4. Matching Funds Partner Outreach

GLT will seek matching funds for projects that appear to be a good fit for EVOS funding. This will include funding from sources including the Forest Legacy Program, USFWS National Coastal Wetlands, and private foundations. This process takes 6-18 months but can yield significant funding that may allow more acres to be purchased.

5. Final Project Completion

GLT will work closely with EVOS Trustee Council Staff, DNR, USFWS and other partners to complete up to approximately $27 million in high priority conservation projects with willing landowners in the Kodiak Island Borough as part of this project.

Budget:

		Year 1	Year 2
		Mar 1, 2013 - Jan 31, 2014	Feb 1, 2014 - Jan 31, 2015
Personnel			
GLT Staff	3 staff, 20hr/wk for 40 wks @ $50/hour	$120,000	$120,000
Travel			
Travel	Airfare to ($4,800) and travel within Kodiak ($20,000) for 6 trips for 2 staff	$24,800	$24,800
Contracted Services			
Appraisal	Appraisals @ $25,000 each	$75,000	$50,000
Phase I Environmental Site Assessment	Phase I ESA reports @ $7,000 - $10,000 each	$18,000	$27,000
Legal	@ $370/ hr	$11,100	$14,800
Subtotal		$248,900	$236,600
Indirect Rate	5%	$12,445	$11,830
Total		$261,345	$248,430

Funding Process:

Due to an ongoing relationship, USFWS Region 7 Partnerships and Habitat Coordinator has offered to facilitate the EVOS funding as a cost reimbursable cooperative agreement between GLT and USFWS. GLT will submit quarterly invoices to USFWS for payment reimbursement as expenses are incurred. GLT will also report quarterly to USFWS regarding project deliverables for the grant period. These reports will also be provided to EVOS staff. Project budget will be reevaluated in September 2013, before year two, to reflect the number of projects moving forward.

Appendices:

a. Kodiak Archipelago Land Conservation Prioritization
b. Great Land Trust press
c. Great Land Trust Accreditation material
d. Great Land Trust Service Area Map