



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

5410 Grosvenor Lane • Bethesda, MD 20814-2144

Tel: (301) 897-9770 • Fax: (301) 530-2471

E-mail: tws@wildlife.org

1 April 2010

Laurel Jennings
Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council
441 West 5th Avenue, Suite 500
Anchorage, AK 99501

Re: The Wildlife Society Comments on Exxon Valdez Restoration Plan SEIS

Dear Ms. Jennings:

The Wildlife Society (TWS) was founded in 1937 and is a non-profit scientific and educational association of over 9,100 professional wildlife biologists and managers, dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education. Our mission is to represent and serve wildlife professionals—the scientists, technicians, and practitioners actively working to study, manage, and conserve native and desired non-native wildlife and their habitats worldwide.

The Wildlife Society is committed to a world where humans and wildlife co-exist. We work to ensure that wildlife and their habitats are conserved through management actions that take into careful consideration relevant scientific information. We create opportunities for this to occur by involving professional wildlife managers, disseminating wildlife science, advocating for effective wildlife policy and law, and building the active support of an informed citizenry.

While TWS has not adopted a formal position statement on the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Restoration Plan, many of our members in Alaska and in the federal agencies were involved in overseeing the oil spill response and designing the restoration plan. In 2002, Tom Franklin, then Wildlife Policy Director for TWS, described a visit to the Kodiak Archipelago to areas where Exxon Valdez habitat protection had occurred in the 1990s. Among Mr. Franklin's observations in his article for *Wildlife Society Bulletin* (Vol. 31, No. 2 (Summer, 2003)); contributed to by Caitlin A. Burke and Richard S. Fritsky) are the following:

“In a notable display of collaborative conservation, the State of Alaska, federal natural resource agencies, conservation organizations, and private citizens have risen to meet the challenge (of comprehensive oil spill restoration), joining together to advocate long-term conservation for Kodiak and Afognak islands through habitat protection, research and public education...

“With a diverse landscape ranging from coastlines to mountains, wetlands to rainforest, Kodiak is a place of startling ecological wealth...”

“Despite devastating ecological, social and psychological effects of the oil spill on the lands and people of Alaska, huge steps have been taken to restore the affected area and to protect habitat threatened by the oil spill. The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill (EVOS) Trustee

Council was formed in 1991 to oversee the expenditure of the \$900-million civil settlement reached between the state of Alaska, the federal government and Exxon Corporation.

“It was agreed these funds would be used according to the EVOS Restoration Plan, which was developed after extensive public input, to restore resources that suffered a substantial loss or decline as a result of the oil spill.

“The Restoration Plan has been a huge success for the environment, people and economy of the area, and is a model of what cooperation and innovative thinking can achieve for conservation...

“Conservation achievements on the Kodiak archipelago in the wake of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill are a testament to what states, federal agencies, conservation groups, and private citizens can accomplish when faced with an unprecedented threat to their land, life and livelihood. Out of the tragedy has come permanent protection of prime coastal wildlife habitat, benefiting Kodiak NWR, the majestic Kodiak brown bear, and a multitude of coastal and marine wildlife species.”

The Wildlife Society recognizes that similar habitat successes have occurred in Prince William Sound and in oil spill impacted areas of the Kenai Peninsula. On behalf of TWS members involved in the oil spill restoration plan, TWS hereby wishes to express our gratitude for a job well done by the Trustee Council and a recommendation that you accomplish more of the same within your current proposal to narrow and refine the scope of the Council’s restoration efforts using the remaining oil spill settlement funds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Leopold", written in a cursive style.

Bruce D. Leopold, Ph.D.
President