

Cry of the Wild

Fall 2003, Volume 55

Newsletter of Wildlife Forever



Wildlife
Forever

Grant Helps Alaska Bears, Salmon And Elk

Wildlife Forever recently secured \$75,000 in the newly created Private Stewardship Grant Program (PSGP) from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to benefit brown bears, wild salmon and elk which spend part of their seasonal life-cycle on privately owned land on Afognak Island in the western Gulf of Alaska.

Working with Afognak Native Corporation, Alaska Department of Fish & Game and the USFWS, Wildlife Forever is assisting with a timber road removal and grass-reseeding project that will limit motorized access to large interior tracts of Afognak.

"The majority of America's threatened, endangered or 'at risk' species depend, at least in part, on privately owned land for their survival." That's the message coming from USFWS Director Steve Williams, and his agency is putting money behind the message.

Two-thirds of Afognak Island is privately owned and rotational timber harvest has occurred there since the late 1970s. In less than 30 years, 1,000 miles of logging roads have laced the island with growing harassment problems for brown bears, sedimentation in salmon spawning rivers and increased elk poaching that has caused hunting season closings in recent years.

The island is a rugged 744-square mile natural gem with warmer winters than almost anywhere in Alaska and a location amidst sea currents that make it a collection point for plankton, the building blocks of a rich maritime food chain that becomes a "predators' ball" for fish, marine mammals and brown bears. Lush Sitka spruce coastal forests provide winter forage and cover for Alaska's largest elk herd.

Selective timber road removal with the PSGP funds will return large sections of Afognak to its primeval state where world class hunting and fishing areas will emerge within second growth timber stands.

Access to these special areas will remain the traditional Alaskan

floatplane, boat and hiking experience.

"Private land stewardship funding adds conservation value to habitat needed by bears, salmon and elk," says Wildlife Forever's president Douglas H. Grann. "Landowners who have harvested timber get assistance restoring rare habitat quickly thus lessening the risks that area wildlife will slide toward threatened or endangered status. Brown bears hate motorized activity and will abandon critical feeding areas because of roads. Salmon can be denied spawning areas by road culverts blocked with debris."

Currently, all but one of Afognak's eight elk herds is reachable by roads, but the new PSGP grant will enhance wild conditions for two or three more of the herds. Hunters and anglers on adjacent public lands gain the benefit of abundant populations.





From The Field

Down The Path

This is the time of year we start planning for the coming new year. Part of that process is to take a look back at the trail we have just passed.

Wildlife Forever is fortunate to have the strong conviction of members and donors like you.



Additionally the continued support of major corporations like Waste Management, the nation's largest recycler has been very important. Waste Management has been a strong supporter of Wildlife Forever since 1999 with contributions totaling over \$150,000.

Similarly, ConAgra and its subsidiaries Jiffy Pop Popcorn and Act II have been ongoing sponsors of the State-Fish Art Contest, our aquatic education outreach program for kids.

Wildlife Forever is also grateful for the support of the Minnesota Twins and #16 Doug Mientkiewicz. Their efforts raised over \$50,000 this year while enjoying the wonders of the great outdoors... fishing.

The support of our dedicated members and these organizations is deeply appreciated. Without you, many great conservation projects across the country would never have gotten done.

While there is the usual flurry of project activity at the very end of the year, thus far Wildlife Forever has done a lot of good work. We have completed projects in Washington, Michigan, Minnesota, Arizona and Alaska. Plus new projects are ready-to-go in Maryland, Idaho, South Carolina, Connecticut, Wisconsin and Vermont. These efforts and many more will benefit wildlife species throughout the United States.

Thank you for your support. I would love to hear from you and learn of conservation needs in your area. The Sportsmen's Challenge grant program is still available so help us, help your community.

Yours for wildlife... forever,

Douglas H. Grann
President & CEO

Sportsmen's Challenge Grants Are Hot

The Wildlife Forever conservation project committee has never been busier. Since the recent announcement of the Sportsmen's Challenge grant program, hundreds of grant applications have been downloaded from the Wildlife Forever web site. Many applications have already been received, approved and are merely waiting for the match.

Among the approved projects are:

Connecticut: Evaluate current woodcock population and habitat to assist in developing a long term management strategy;

Maryland: Restore 150 acres of wintering habitat for waterfowl, plant 400 acres of grass buffers to reduce sediment pollution to Chesapeake Bay;

Idaho: Restore and maintain pristine native plant communities needed to support elk, bighorn sheep, moose and mule deer;

Minnesota: Walleye fish hatchery

support in Big Stone City and rip rap more shoreline of Big Stone Lake.

In all, \$50,000 is available to local sportsmen's groups to help carry out important conservation efforts right in their own backyards. When combined with matching funds, \$100,000 worth of conservation projects will be completed through this new program.

Sportsmen's Challenge grants are made available up to \$2,500 each to qualifying groups. The funds must be matched from a third-party donor and sent to Wildlife Forever for validation of the match. Groups that promote fish and wildlife habitat are eligible to apply for the funds. Programs that enhance fish and wildlife populations through management and research can also compete for the challenge grants.

Details and grant applications can be found on the Wildlife Forever web site under "Grants" (www.wildlifeforever.org).

Federal Energy Policy Deserves Sportsmen's Concern

The October 2003 issue of *Field & Stream* magazine featured a story on the threats posed to wildlife by accelerated oil and gas exploration to treasured fish and game areas in western states. The coverage raised concern over trade-offs that energy development causes for clean water, open space, and migration corridors used by big game such as elk, mule deer and antelope. Rapidly expanding coal bed methane projects are radically worsening water quality



thereby ruining trout streams and poisoning migratory ducks and geese as well as other wildlife. Wildlife Forever's Doug Grann called on Congress and the Bush Administration to carefully weigh fish and wildlife impacts in the current Energy Bill deliberations. "We cannot sacrifice the wildlife and wild country of this planet while doing nothing to develop alternative fuels and improving fuel efficiency of our cars, factories, and homes," Grann said.

Cry of the Wild is a quarterly publication of Wildlife Forever. Douglas H. Grann, Editor, President & CEO
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Visit our web page at www.wildlifeforever.org or
E-mail us at info@wildlifeforever.org

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Memorials And Celebratory Gifts



You can remember a loved one or special event with a gift to **The Forever Fund**, Wildlife Forever's endowment. This is a special account in which only the interest is used to support our mission. Your gift . . . your memorial . . . your special recognition will continue "forever".

Wildlife Forever will send an acknowledgement to the person or family you designate. Plus, your special gift will be acknowledged in *Cry Of The Wild*.

Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____ on behalf of: _____
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NEWS-03-F

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